

THE
WIDOW'D WIFE.

A

COMEDY:

AS IT IS ACTED AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL

IN

DRURY LANE.

BY HIS MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

BY W. KENRICK.

DUBLIN:

Printed by J. A. HUSBAND,

FOR

G. FAULKNER, J. HOEY, Sen. L. FLIN, J. EXSHAW,
H. SAUNDERS, W. SLEATER, J. POTTS,
D. CHAMBERLAINE, J. SHEPPARD, J. MITCHELL,
J. WILLIAMS, and W. COLLES.

M,DCC,LXVIII.

Dramatis Personæ.

<i>Lord Courtly,</i>	<i>Mr. J. AICKIN.</i>
<i>General Melmoth,</i>	<i>Mr. HOLLAND.</i>
<i>Alderman Lombard,</i>	<i>Mr. LOVE.</i>
<i>Colonel Camply,</i>	<i>Mr. AICKIN.</i>
<i>Young Melmoth,</i>	<i>Mr. REDDISH.</i>
<i>Furnival,</i>	<i>Mr. PALMER.</i>
<i>Mineral,</i>	<i>Mr. DODD.</i>
<i>Syllogism,</i>	<i>Mr. KING.</i>
<i>Mrs. Mildmay,</i>	<i>Mrs. PRITCHARD.</i>
<i>Narcissa,</i>	<i>Mrs. ABINGTON.</i>
<i>Sophia,</i>	<i>Mrs. PALMER.</i>
<i>Sift,</i>	<i>Mrs. CLIVE.</i>
<i>Susan,</i>	<i>Mrs. BRADSHAW.</i>

SERVANTS, CHAIRMEN, &c.



THE
WIDOW'D WIFE.

A C T. I.

SCENE. I. *The North Parade at Bath.*

Enter Mineral, and Furnival with a news-paper in his hand.

Mineral.

IS there any thing in the papers, Barrister?—

Furn. Nothing but medical nostrums, and lists of idle company at these watering places.—One would think the whole kingdom was infected with the plague.

[Giving Mineral the news-paper.]

Min. With two at least, credulity and dissipation.

Furn. By both which, doctor we thrive, and have therefore no reason to complain.

Min. I don't know that:—they are useful indeed to you liberal adventurers, who depend on the doctrine of chances.

Furn. Ay, and to you medical adventurers too. The practice of physick depends as much on the doctrine of chances as that of gaming. Besides, credulity breeds quacks, as dissipation does gamesters; and both may become too general for us regular practitioners.

Min. They may so;—but you seem, Barrister, to have thrown up the cards, with regard to public parties at least;—you play a higher game, I suppose, in private; eh!—

Furn. Why, faith, cards and dice are but poultry tools in the hands of a real artist. The passions and

foibles of mankind are not only more effectual, but more entertaining implements.

Min. True,—but you can play upon them at the card table ; I have seen you do it, Barrister ; I have seen you do it.

Furn. What, when you were at the same game doctor ?—Ah ! You spiders of the faculty spin your thread as fine as any of the fraternity ; woe be to the poor flies that are entangled in your web.

Min. Nay, but we physicians do let our patients recover.

Furn. Ay, sometimes ; as we gamesters let novices win, and for the same reason ; to hook them only deeper into play. Do you ever cure any body of coming to Bath ?

Min. Why, to be sure, we have some regard to the prosperity of the corporation.

Furn. And to your own doctor.—Every crazy constitution that arrives, becomes to you physicians a good annuity ; a copyhold inheritance, of which you are tenants for life. For your own sakes, therefore, you must keep the tottering tenements from tumbling. But that's all : if you patch them up to stand wind and weather, from season to season, it is as much as you require. A thorough repair might bring on a writ of ejectment, and undo you.

Min. Nay, Barrister, you are now too severe ; do you think the faculty quite void of the milk of human kindness ? Have we no nature ?

Furn. The milk of human kindness, ha ! ha ! ha ! —Yes, yes, you make a fine milch cow of poor nature indeed. —But come let us hear ; who are our new comers ?

Min. Ay, let us see—[*Reads the news-paper.*]—arrived since our last, the duke and duchess of Dangle court ; the earl and countess of Squander-field ; count Splenetic ; baron Podagra ; lord and lady Dupe ; lord Courtly.—O, pray, is not that he, who had such an ill run the last meeting at New-market ?

Furn. The same ;—six thousand upon Gimcrack, and four upon Silver-Legs ;—faith the turf was a little cruel to him, considering the state of his finances.

Min.

Min. So I suppose he has now mortgaged his estate, and is come to take his revenge of New-market races, on the rooms at Bath.

Furn. Entre nous, doctor, his estate was dipped before: but let that go no farther. I am under obligations to his lordship, and have the honour of his confidence.—Have we any more of the right honourables?

Min. No,—but commoners, like herrings at Shetland in shoals.—[*Reads again.*] Sir Peregrine Peevish, and lady; Mr. alderman Lombard; Mr. and Mrs. Fretful; the two Miss Drinkwaters; Master and Miss Ricketty; and so on, with Mr. and Mrs; Master and Miss, to the end of the catalogue.—Do you know any of these I have mentioned?

Furn. Yes, the alderman is consigned to me: do you know him?—

Min. Oh, very well. I was called in when he was last at Bath, and found him laid up with the gout. We set him upon his legs again with difficulty, in a month. But the boisterous wretch swore our fees were so exorbitant, that he would hobble upon crutches through the ward of Cripplegate all his life-time, sooner than be so fleeced again, by any water-doctors in Christendom.—

Furn. Ha, ha, ha! well said Mr. Alderman, you must know he is a kind of wit.—He is come down now to stand candidate for a vacant borough here in the West; to which he is gone over, to shew himself to the constituents.—He is recommended to me by our old friend Scrutiny Canvass, of Lincoln's-Inn; who tells me the curmudgeon rolls in wealth, and, though covetous as a miser in any laudable pursuit, is lavish as a prodigal in the prosecution of any absurd project of his own; at present, it seems, he is disposed to empty his coffers to get into parliament; so that if money will effect it, he is in a fair way of becoming a limb of the legislative body of Great-Britain.

Min. And a lame one he is likely to prove; however, I wish you success with him.—Egad, here he comes.—

Furn. As I expected. He was to meet me here, on his return, to settle the business of the canvass.

Min. Well;—I shall only just renew my acquaintance, and take leave of you.

Furn. Nay, I believe you need not withdraw. I shall affect no secrets; for whenever a man wants to take the advantage of another, his surest mode of deception is the appearance of openness and plain-dealing.

[*Mineral walks to the back of the stage and puts the news paper in his pocket.*

Enter Alderman Lombard.

Furn. Mr. Alderman, your humble servant.—

Lomb. Oh! counsellor! your servant.——Well I have—but—[*seeing Mineral*] you are not alone, I see.

Furn. Only a particular friend of mine, and I find an old acquaintance of yours too, Mr. Alderman.

Min. [*coming forward*] Mr. Lombard your most obsequious.—I hope I have the satisfaction to see you well.

Lomb. Oh, your servant, doctor, your servant.—Tolerably well, I thank you; my supporters are pretty stout at present, if you can reap any satisfaction from seeing that.—I do from feeling it, I assure you.

[*Stamps sturdily on the ground.*

Min. And I from hearing it, believe me, Mr. Alderman.

Lomb. Indeed, doctor, I can't; but no compliments.—I don't come to Bath this time to be made such a fool of as I was the last.

Min. [*Aside.*] It will be well for you if you are not made a worse, considering how much better hands you have fallen into.

Lomb. Would you think it, Squire Furnival, when I was here two years ago, this worthy physician and his associates had the conscience to take above a hundred guineas of me, only for coaxing the cramp out of my great toe.

Min. A violent paroxysm of the gout.

Lomb. You gave it that formidable name indeed, to enhance the merit of your prescriptions; but what did you administer but a dozen or two of innocent slip slops, and as many gallons of insipid warm water?

Furn. Nothing more!

Min.

Min. Oh, Sir! Mr. Lombard's was a bad case, a very bad case indeed! we had frequent consultation of the faculty upon it.

Lomb. Yes, yes, my case was a bad one sure enough, for while you and your accomplices had your hand in my purse, and merited the discipline of the horse-pond, you hurried me without mercy to be duck'd and pump'd like a pick-pocket.

Min. You are pleas'd to be sarcastical, Mr. Lombard; but when the fit returns, I shall find you of different opinion. So, 'till then, your most obsequious humble servant. [Exit.]

Lomb. Oh! good day to you, Sir.

Furn. I am sorry, Mr. Alderman, you were so severe on my friend Mineral. The doctor has more interest in the borough of Gluttonbury, than you imagine.

Lomb. Has he?

Furn. He cures the mayor and aldermen of at least a dozen surfeits in a year. They cannot possibly live without him.

Lomb. Odsso, I am sorry for that: and yet I am partly glad of it too; as you say he is your friend, you may easily excuse my raillery;—tell him it is my way,—that's an excuse for any thing, you know: or egad, for the matter of that, if I thought 'twbu'd secure him in our interest, I'd be taken with a slight touch of the gout to-morrow morning.

Furn. Not just now, Mr. Alderman, if you please. Electioneering is bustling work, and if we shou'd be hard run, you may have a use for your feet, you know.

Lomb. Ha! ha! ha!—well,—I have been to Gluttonbury!

Furn. I hope to good purpose, Mr. Alderman.

Lomb. Egad, I am afraid, to very little. You shall judge. As I was quite a stranger in the place, I naturally inquired, you know, for the mayor of the corporation; who received me kindly enough for a stranger, and civilly offered to call a meeting of the principal town's people the next day. Accordingly I got a speech ready for them at my inn, over night,

and met his worship with Mr. recorder, and the rest, in the town-hall, in the morning.

Furn. Good.

Lomb. Ay, so far so good: but you shall hear.—I assured them, as usual on these occasions, of my firm attachment to my king and country in general, and of my regard for Gluttonbury in particular.—Then I talked to them a good deal about the constitution, and the revolution, and the protestant succession, and all that;—giving them, now and then, a little liberty and property, trade and prosperity, and so forth: and, egad upon the whole, I thought I acquitted myself with energy.

Furn. And what effect had it?

Lomb. No effect at all, Sir.

Furn. No!

Lomb. No.

Furn. You surprize me.

Lomb. No effect at all in the world, Sir, I assure you. You may well be surprized, indeed.

Furn. And yet, its not so very surprizing neither: Oratory, like every thing else, has its day. We have seen some of our greatest speakers talk themselves out of breath, till they talked themselves out of credit. For, after all, words are but wind, you know, Mr. Alderman.—Had you no bank-paper about you? a written plea has sometimes a better effect than one delivered viva voce; not at all the rhetorical flourishes of Cicero and Demosthenes put together, have half the pathos of the plain hand-writing of three or four petty clerks in Thread-needle-street;—bank-notes, bank-notes, Mr. Lombard, are now a-days, the only prevailing arguments.

Lomb. Egad, Mr. Furnival, I begin to think we citizens don't rightly understand these matters.—You gentlemen of the law know how to go about them much better. For my part, I own it is a little out of my way. All I can say therefore is, that if you will undertake the canvass, you shall want no materials, that I can furnish.—But,—pray, what is my rival candidate? He is a man of war, I find;—does he carry any

THE WIDOW'D WIFE.

9

any weight of metal?—Has he the summum bonum about him? ha!

Furn. It seems he has a good estate, Sir, besides his commission.—He bears a very great character in the neighbourhood. They tell me he is a patriot, a man of public spirit, one whose motto is Dulce et decorum—

Lomb. —pro patria morum. Ha! Mr. Furnival. Ay, I remember the passage;—I have construed it formerly at Merchant-Taylor's;—tho', by the way, I remember, I thought it mighty silly, even in those days. Die for one's country! ha, ha, ha!—That might be patriotism among the ancient Romans; but we modern patriots live upon our country, Mr. Furnival. Ha, ha, ha!

Furn. Ha, ha, ha! very well, very well, indeed, Mr. Lombard.—But, as to men of your antagonist's profession, they are bound in honour, you know, to die at the word of command without grumbling.

Lomb. Right, counsellor, right:—But what—he has a regiment,—he is a colonel I think!

Furn. A bloody-minded colonel, I assure you, Mr. Lombard; one who makes it his boast, that he is ready to spill the last drop in his veins, in defence of his constituents. He'll bleed for 'em, Mr. Lombard.

Lomb. Bleed for them! Ha, ha, ha! Yes, yes, he must bleed for them, and that pretty freely too, let me tell him, if he intends to stand the poll with me.—But stay, here's company coming: suppose we adjourn to my lodgings, and there settle our plan of business.

Furn. Or to mine, Sir, which are nearer.

Lomb. With all my heart.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II. *Mrs. Mildmay's lodgings.*

Enter Narcissa and Sophia.

Narc. So, cousin Sophy! your papa, I find, is arrived at Bath; we shall now see what account you will give of yourself, for having contracted a violent inclination for a man without his knowledge; and that too for a man whom he never saw.

Soph. I contract a violent inclination for a man, Narcissa! what, I suppose, because Colonel Camply has repeated his visits pretty frequently of late!

Narc. Nay, nay, it is too late to retract now. It is to no purpose to play the prude with me, or the coquet with him any longer. Have not you said an hundred times, that you preferred colonel Camply to all the men in the world?

Soph. I must have talked in my sleep then, Narcissa: for I am certain my tongue never so betrayed my heart while I was waking.

Narc. Oho! you confess, then, it wou'd have betrayed your heart, if it had talked so. Ah! cousin Sophy!

Soph. Pshaw, that's provoking now.

Narc. Ha, ha, ha! a little slip of that same tongue, my dear.—But make yourself easy for waking or sleeping, I believe it is very innocent of betraying your regard for colonel Camply, my information is founded on better authority, I assure you. Those speaking eyes of yours, Sophy, are apter tell-tales.—What you reckon nothing, it seems, on the insignificant nods, expressive smiles, and languishing looks, the colonel and you have been reciprocally exchanging, these three months past.

Soph. Go, go, you are a giddy girl, Narcissa.

Narc. And you a sober, stay'd, prudent, unmarried gentlewoman, just turn'd of twenty! Prithce cast off this formality of countenance, and leave it to the wear of mincing abigails, and maiden aunts, with their other weather-beaten remnants of antiquity. I tell you it does not at all become a girl hardly out of her teens, and little older than my self. Believe me, those who affect to be grave when they are young, will be glad to be merry when they are old; excuse me, my dear, but I am a little in spirits this morning.

Soph. Indeed you have always an astonishing flow of them.

Narc. Have not I?—Well but come? How is it to be? The colonel will break the matter, I suppose, to your father; the bargain will be struck, the match huddled up, cloaths bought, jewels presented, and the day fix'd immediately. I shall be all impatience till it be settled, and we stand up to dance at your wedding. I have not had a country dance, no not this half century, as lady Pedigree says.

Soph.

THE WIDOW'D WIFE.

11

Soph. And yet this business, which you seem to have dispatched so expeditiously, may be longer in settling than you imagine, if, indeed, it be ever settled at all.

Narc. Hey day! What's the matter now? Your lover and you are, I am sure, so far agreed, that you need only tell each other your minds; if you have not done it already. He has a fine fortune of his own, and is satisfied with yours, though not a penny be added to your grandfather's legacy. And then your papa, who loves you so tenderly as to see you once a year, and write to you by some of his clerks once a quarter, will hardly plead paternal fondness, to keep you longer on his hands.

Soph. I don't know how it will be. There is like to be a strange revolution in my father's affairs. I learn he is going to be married himself.

Narc. Himself! well, but I hope he'll be so good as to see you married first.

Soph. At the same time, I suppose, my dear, to save charges; for I hear he has partly made up a match for me with some noble lord. ————— [Sighs.]

Narc. And do you sigh for that, Sophy? Now for my part, were I in your case, I should think it mighty clever; that is, on a supposition the lord were deserving of the lady. For as you have no violent inclination, you know, for colonel Camply, it is an easy matter to break through a slight one for a private gentleman, in favour of a peer. —O gad, that I had but an independent fortune of thirty thousand pounds, as you have, and that two or three of these lords wou'd pay their court to me!

Soph. Why, what wou'd you do? Wou'd you have one of them?

Narc. Yes, if I lik'd them well enough. Otherwise I should be apt to shew myself a daughter of Eve, and repeat the first sin of disobedience, if any father of mine should take upon him to know what I lik'd better than I did myself. But why do I talk?—Poor I! that am dependent, and can expect barely half that sum—

Soph. Have yet a viscount for one admirer, and a commoner for another, worth e'er a lord of them all.

Narc.

Narc. I don't say that.—I have not the vanity to compare Mr. Melmoth, my Sir Frederic that may be, to the flower of the British nobility; tho' I own I would not exchange him for the best of the bunch of baronets.—But yonder comes the colonel, in his usual sorrowful faunter, with his hands in his bosom, and such a penitential countenance! What, in the name of wonder, can be the matter with him now? Had you a quarrel with him last night? Did he win of you at cards, tear the mount of your fan, tread upon the train of your new sack, or make a loud whisper of a secret that has been publicly talked of among your acquaintance for these four months?

Soph. Prithee, what can that be, Narcissa?

Narc. Oh! the old story, man's constancy and woman's caprice, the subject of half the love songs and halfpenny ballads that has been chanted since Cupid was an arch wag, and his mother an errant jilt. Upon my word, Sophy, you sometimes treat that poor gentleman very ill; and if you don't behave more consistently, I will as surely tell him, as it is true, that your cruelty is all affected; that you are as much in love with him, as he is with you; and in short, that you doat on him to absurdity.—Therefore look to it, Sophy, look to it. [Exit.]

Soph. Go thy ways, my chearful, chatty, agreeable cousin.

Enter Colonel Camply.

Soph. Good morrow, colonel.

Camp. My dearest Sophia, good morrow.

Soph. You look grave, Mr. Camply.—[*Aside.*] But I guess the reason, and will for once, divert myself with it.

Camp. It is impossible I should not be concerned at every accident that throws an obstacle in the way between me and my Sophia.

Soph. Oh, Sir, obstacles are to be surmounted;—the more difficulty the more honour.

Camp. Yes, Madam, and the more danger too.

Soph. O fie, colonel! a soldier and apprehensive of danger!

Camp.

Camp. Of whatever I may be apprehensive, Madam, I fear none but that of losing you.

Soph. And is there any danger of that? Methinks I should be glad of an accident of that kind, that I might see how gallantly you wou'd behave on the occasion. For, to say the truth, I have been so sparing of giving you trouble, colonel, that, if I should yield so, I am afraid you would hardly set any store by what cost you so very, very little pains in the acquisition.

Camp. How can you take a delight, Sophia, in giving pain to a heart so intirely devoted to your pleasure?

Soph. Poor heart! well, come, tell us its grievance. What is the matter with it? What are these dreadful obstacles you talk of? Are they of my raising?

Camp. No, my dearest Sophia, I have so much confidence in your generosity, that I believe I should not be much uneasy at any difficulties of your starting.

Soph. Indeed that is tolerably presuming, however, colonel, and confident enough in all conscience. Yet, whatever you may think, Sir, those obstacles wou'd be the hardest for you to remove, I assure you; and, you may depend on it, 'twill be your own fault, if any difficulties, thrown in the way by others, prove either formidable or dangerous.

Camp. Kind, generous Sophia! a thousand times let me thank thee for that assurance. [*Seizes her hand, and eagerly kisses it.*] Oh! how this declaration revives me!

Soph. Well then, colonel, as you are now come to yourself again, tell me plainly what's the matter. You have been already with my father, I suppose?

Camp. No, Madam; but I purpose to do myself that honour to-morrow; tho' it is probable, from what I have heard to-day, it will be to no manner of purpose.

Soph. What, you have heard, I suppose, that he intends to marry me to a title.

Camp. I have, Sophia; and this piece of intelligence is attended with that of another unlucky circumstance: Mr. Lombard is come down to canvass in the borough for which I have declared myself a candidate.

Soph. Call you that an unlucky circumstance? If
you

you have a mind to take any advantage of it, it may, on the contrary, prove a lucky one; for if I know any thing of my father, he will certainly give up to you all his authority over his daughter Sophy, if you will give up to him all your interest in the borough of Gluttonbury.—And, indeed, now I think on't, you are rather too young, colonel, for a senator.—Besides, I should not chuse to have a husband taken up with the business of the nation, when he should be employed in mine.

Camp. Sophia !

Soph. It seems as if you intended to be no longer my humble servant, when you are so ready to enter into the service of your constituents.

Camp. By heavens, Madam, if you require it—

Soph. You'd give up your country for your mistress, I suppose.—I thank you, Sir.—No, no, colonel, I did but jest with you; I am not so unreasonable as that comes to neither. Here's my hand; I have made my election; do you go and do your best to make sure of yours,—or, stay, I was just going to take my chocolate; Will you drink a dish before you go?

Camp. With pleasure, Madam.—My dearest Sophia !—

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mrs. Mildmay and Narcissa.

Narc. Bless me, mama, what harm can there be in the indulgence of a little harmless mirth? Is it possible my cheerfulness can give any body offence?

Mrs. Mild. I am fearful, my dear, lest it should offend nobody so much as yourself. When I was of your age, I was just such another wild unthinking thing as you are. Careless of censure, and presumptuous that while I preserved my innocence, I might laugh at decorum, as mere formality; but the world is come to such a pass, Narcissa, that virtue itself is often of less consequence to the peace and happiness of our lives than the appearance of it. It is not enough to be innocent, unless we seem so.

Narc. And in what do I appear so heinously guilty, madam? In laughing at the rueful dejection of the poor colonel, or in giving encouragement to the addresses

dress of Mr. Melmoth, to whom you have never before made any objection.

Mrs. Mild. It is true, my dear, I have hitherto made none, because I wou'd not assume too great an influence over you, in making a choice of so much importance to the future happiness of your life. But I shou'd but ill discharge the duty of a mother, Narcissa, if I did not confess, and that without any particular objection to Mr. Melmoth, that I think you would be much happier with my lord Courtly, who hath made the fairest offers, and of whose regard for you, I am now more than ever convinced.

Narc. I am obliged to lord Courtly, Madam, for his good opinion of me; and under other circumstances he might possibly have had less reason to complain of my indifference.

Mrs. Mild. Well, my dear, I only speak my sentiments. I have no objection to your engaging the affections or encouraging the addresses of any deserving lover; but I must insist on your indulging yourself less in raillery, at the expence of your friends.

Narc. But I shou'd think, Madam, one's friends would be the least apt to take offence, and that the behaviour you complain of might be a good method to put their friendship to the proof.

Mrs. Mild. Then you think wrong, Narcissa. I know by woful experience, the danger of trifling with a heart that loves one. It was this fatal indiscretion in me that gave rise to a groundless jealousy in the breast of the fondest of husbands, and deprived you of the tender affections of a father.

Narc. I am happy, Madam, in having that loss so well supplied by yours, that I never felt it; but, my dear mama, why do you so often touch of late on this subject? You know it always makes you melancholy.—If my father were living, indeed!—but that is surely impossible.

Mrs. Mild. And yet I know not of a certainty that he is dead; tho' I own 'tis most probable, as I learned he embarked for India near twelve years ago, and, as I before have told you, I have not once heard of him since.

Narc. What pity, Madam, you did not retain his name!

name ! for now, if even living, and anxious for reconciliation, his patience might be exhausted in fruitless inquiries after you.

Mrs. Mild. Under the forgotten name of Wildman True, Narcissa ; but your rigid uncle, to whose kindness we are nevertheless indebted for our whole fortune, so highly resented your father's injurious usage of me, that he insisted on my renouncing the name, and, if possible, even the memory, of a man who had so cruelly wronged me.

Narc. And yet I have heard you say, my father was not altogether to blame.

Mrs. Mild. No, my dear Narcissa. It is the recollection of the share I had in contributing to that fatal separation that distresses me. It is that which makes me look upon your union with Frederic Melmoth, under the most fearful apprehensions, lest a similar disposition to mine, should make you fall into the same errors.— Good heav'n ! what would have become of us, if my relations, satisfied of the innocence of my conduct, had not forgiven its absurdity, and continued their protection to me after the departure of Mr. Wildman !— unhappy Wildman ! fond, frantic man !—And yet favoured as I have been ever by them, how have I since lived in the eye world !—in a state of solitary, neglected, doubtful widowhood !—I had once a son too, and you a brother ; but whether he be living, or lost to us for ever, with his father, heav'n only knows.

Narc. Nay, my dear mama, you now carry your surmises too far. You certainly do us wrong to indulge your melancholy, as I my cheerfulness.

Mrs. Mild. I cannot help it, Narcissa. In you my hopes are now all centered. Let me not be deprived of the only comfort left me, in the prospect of your happiness.

Narc. Be assured, mama, that if it depend on me, you shall not. I will check the vivacity of my temper, and be more on the reserve.

Mrs. Mild. Do, my dear, and in return be assured, that I shall be no farther an advocate for lord Courtly, than his merit will justify. But you must excuse my still

still indulging a wish, that you had less partiality for young Melmoth.

Narc. Indeed, madam, he is possessed of so much goodness of heart, that I shou'd hope it out of his power to make a bad husband.

Mrs. Mild. I hope so too : but the goodness of a man's heart, Narcissa, is not always a sufficient guard against the impetuosity of his passions ; witness your unhappy father.

Narc. Pray, mama, no more, I beg of you.——

Let us join the colonel and my cousin Sophy.——

Mrs. Mild. I have done my dear,—lead the way.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Young Melmoth's lodgings.*

Enter Lombard, followed by a servant in livery.

Lombard, (as he enters.)

NOT know whether your master be at home !

Serv. Mr. Syllogism, his gentleman, is at home, Sir.

Lomb. His gentleman ! eh !—What the supercilious coxcomb with the starch phyz, that called at my lodgings this morning, I suppose.——An affected, formal rascal !——I had a good mind to have broken his head, for the flippancy of his tongue, and the impertinent gravity of his countenance ;——well ! send him to me then.

Serv. Here Mr. Syllogism comes, Sir.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Syllogism.

Lomb. Is your master within, fellow ?

Syllog. Sir, my godfathers gave me a name, and you see I wear my own livery.

Lomb. But you have a master notwithstanding ; such a one as he is.

Syllog. True, Sir, such as he is ; talis qualis ; herus, non magister, nec preceptor. He learned more of me than

than of his tutor, and is too grateful to treat me as a menial.

Lomb. Zounds, Sir, was not you at my lodgings an hour ago, with a draught from Frederic Melmoth?—Don't you serve him?

Syllog. Faithfully, and all his secrets keep.

Lomb. Is it a secret then if he be within?

Syllog. None, Sir, unless he were within, and then there might be a doubt whether he was within or no. But when he is actually gone out, Sir, there's no mystery in the case; it is as clear as day-light that he is not at home.——

Lomb. What pedantic puppy are you! Some catch-penny casuist that our young spendthrift picked up among the starving book-worms at college, I suppose.

Syllog. I was indeed a servitor at Brazen-Nose when Mr. Melmoth was matriculated.

Lomb. And was expelled for a pimp, when he was rusticated for a rake: ha!

Syllog. I can't deny, Sir, that I took more to him than either of us did to our books; and, being thought too disorderly to enter into orders, I determined to abandon short commons and the classicks, to follow the fortunes of my young master. That, Sir, is my history.

Lomb. And so you may now deservedly starve together. Tell your master that from me.

Syllog. I hope Sir, you are not going——It is so very civil a message, that I should take it as a particular favour if you might be prevailed on to stay a minute or two, and tell him yourself.——I expect him in every moment to dress: so that if your worship pleases to step into the next room, and just sit down a little.——

Lomb. I think I will: as I have something to say to him,—[*Aside.*]—that may prevent his troubling me with any more of his draughts. [Exit.]

Syllog. Now, if any thing should have touched the heart of this old Turk, and sent him hither with the money for the bill he refused to accept just now.—But,—Oh, here comes my master.

Enter Young Melmoth.

Y. Melm. Well, Syllogism, have you presented the draught,

draught, with my compliments, to alderman Lombard, as I ordered you?

Syllog. Yes, Sir; and he accepted the compliments civilly enough, but the draught itself he has churlishly protested.

Y. Melm. Protested! how?

Syllog. Why, Sir, he protested he would not pay it; and though there was no notary by, I am afraid he will be as good as his word.

Y. Melm. Impertinent! This covetous old fellow can't bear the thoughts of my spending my father's money, though he gets so much per cent. for its remittance. Did you tell him I was under an immediate necessity for it?

Syllog. I did, Sir: and for that reason he said, if he had no other, he would not accept it.

Y. Melm. What can the penurious old scoundrel mean?

Syllog. So I thought to myself, Sir, exactly! What can this penurious old scoundrel mean, thought I.—But to save us both the trouble of guessing, Sir, suppose we ask him: he is but in the next room, waiting your honour's return.——

Y. Melm. Why did you not tell me that before? Go and let him know I am here. [*Exit Syllogism.*] What can have brought the churl hither? good manners, or ill nature? It must be the latter; for of the former, he has not a single grain.—

Re-enter Lombard and Syllogism.

Lomb. Well, young gentleman——

Y. Melm. I think not quite so well, old gentleman. You refused, it seems, to pay the bill I drew upon you this morning.

Lomb. I did so; and shall refuse to pay any other you may draw in the afternoon.

Y. Melm. Come, come, Mr. Alderman, you may think you are acting the part of my father's friend in these indirect endeavours to restrain, what you are pleased to call, my extravagance. But if I know any thing of his disposition, from the tenour of his correspondence with me, he'll not think himself obliged to you for reducing me to the necessity of applying elsewhere

where for the supplies requisite to support the character of a gentleman.

Lomb. Your father's friend ! No, Sir, I act as my own friend ; as you ought to do, and as every wise man will do.—The character of a gentleman ! I should be glad to know how many cent. per annum your modesty thinks necessary to the support of this fine character. It is not a month since you drew for the last five hundred, and now you are pressed for another. By the exigence of the present demand, indeed, this should seem destined to stop some gaming gap ; to pay some debt of honour ; that, right or wrong, must be instantly discharged, to support the character of a gentleman.

Y. Melm. It is in part, Sir ; therefore, without any more words, let me have the money ; or a bill upon your house in London may do as well.

Lomb. May it, Sir ? But for the future you will please to discharge your debts of honour with your own bills of credit.—To be plain with you, young man, I am very sorry your father did not take my advice, in having you bred up to some creditable employment—Had you condescended to have been one of my clerks, you might, by constantly fingering of money for seven years together, have learned the value of it.—Or, had you been bound apprentice to——

Y. Melm. Sir !——

Lomb. I say, Sir, had you been brought up to any profession but that idle and unprofitable one of a gentleman, as you call it, you might have had a proper resource when any sinister accident had befallen you.

Y. Melm. What accident then hath befallen me ?

Lomb. Oh, none but what is very natural.—Sir John Melmoth, your father, is dead.

Y. Melm. My father dead !——I am sorry for it.

Lomb. You have reason ; for he hath, with great justice, cut you off with a shilling.

Y. Melm. You astonish me !——But it cannot be.—I'll not believe it.

Sylog. [*Aside*] Nor I—for it does not seem to be orthodox.

Lomb. You may, Sir : I have seen the copy of his will : which hath been duly authenticated, and by which

which he hath bequeathed his whole fortune to the lady, his second wife ; to whom he was married some time before his decease.

Y. Melm. Married again ! Bequeathed his whole fortune to his wife ! and forgot his son !

Lomb. Forgot him ! No, no. Did not I tell you he had remembered him in a very moderate bequest ; which is expressly justified by the mention of his profligate character.

Y. Melm. Profligate ! So then I am reduced to beggary by your malicious misrepresentations of my conduct ! What a wicked, vile, incendiary !

Lomb. Nay, nay, young man, don't be abusive, and call names. Don't put yourself in a passion.—To convince you I am more your friend than you are disposed to think me, I will recommend you to the favour of lady Melmoth, your mother-in-law ; who is returned to England, and has put the management of her affairs into my hands. Nay, with her ladyship's good leave, I may probably soon stand in a nearer relation to you myself than you are aware of : in which case, I shall take proper care of you, on your good behaviour :——in the mean time, as you are short of cash, there,—there's a note for a hundred. But no more five hundreds to pay gaming debts, and support the character of a gentlemen.—Mark that.

Y. Melm. [*Taking the note, and throwing it contemptuously on the ground.*] And there, Sir ; take your poultry paper again. I scorn to be obliged to a man who has acted by me so base, so villainous, a part.—No, Sir ; if what you have told me be true, I must bear my misfortune as I may. Yet even then I hope to find friends that will set me above being indebted to my greatest enemy. [*Walks about in great agitation.*]

Lomb. Nay, if you are so proud and prodigal as that comes to—to throw bank-bills under foot, I have done with you.

[*Stoops to pick up the note, in the mean time Syllogism, who stood behind, snatches it up, and makes him a low bow.*]

Syllog. Excuse me, Sir ; your worship seems to misunderstand us here a little. My master by no means intended

intended you should take the trouble to stoop so low ; he would not affront you so much, Sir. The truth of the matter is, he never carries such trifling bits of paper as these in his pockets, for fear of flinging them out with his handkerchief. The conservation of these, Sir, is my duty, as his purse-bearer. Depend on it, I'll take proper care of it. *Testudo intra tegumen tuta est.* [Putting up the note in his pocket-book.

Lomb. Well, well ; as it is the last you are likely to receive, and I can place it to account, I leave you to make your best of it.

Syllog. [Young Melmoth still walking about in great agitation.] Ha ! gone ! and left the note behind !— Let us see if it be no imposture ; no sham upon us.— No,—Good as the Bank itself.—Now do I shrewdly suspect that all this old fellow has been telling us is apocryphal, if not a downright lie. Would this ten-per-cent. Mammon else so readily trust a disinherited spendthrift with an hundred pounds, on the mere verbal security of his valet-de-chambre ?—This story is certainly trumped up, to carry on some scheme of Sir John's, to restrain the extravagance of his son.—He has a mind, I suppose, to make the youngster bite on the bridle a bit.—Egad, a laudable design ! and it cannot be for my interest, or his, to spoil the project.—— [Aside.

Y. Melm. [Throwing himself into a chair.] Dead ! my father dead !

Syllog. [Aside.] He takes it sadly to heart. But as there is certainly nothing in the story, I'll venture to humour it, without taking part in his afflictions. [To young Melmoth.] Dead, Sir ! and cut your honour off with a shilling !

Y. Melm. [Starting up, and walking about.] It is impossible !

Syllog. Impossible ! To be sure, Sir, it is impossible for a man to die ! Such a thing never happens : the grave rails in the church-yard, and the tombs in the abbey are all lyars. *Haud disputandum est.* Indeed, fathers do sometimes cut off their sons with a shilling. Mine did so by me.

Y. Melm. Prithee hold thy peace. I am shocked at your

your insensibility. But if my ruin cannot affect you, sure your own might ; which is involved in it !

Syllog. Believe me, Sir, I am very sorry that yours should be so unhappily connected ; but it would be impertinent in me to repine at being found in such good company.

Y. Melm. Cease your ribaldry : I am in no disposition to bear with it.——

Syllog. I wish with all my heart you were, Sir ; you would be in a better temper. But I beg your pardon ; I only meant to divert your melancholy.

Y. Melm. What an unfeeling mortal !—[*A knocking without.*]—See who knocks there.

Syllog. Is your honour pleased to be at home, Sir ?

Y. Melm. To colonel Camply only. [*Exit Syllogism.*] What an unaccountable being is this fellow ! grateful and sincere in his attachment to others, yet as insensible of their sufferings as destitute of all regard to himself ; so much is he taken up with the ludicrous display of the peculiarity of his disposition. If we were not too unfeeling ever to be happy, I shou'd envy his indifference.

Enter Colonel Camply.

Camp. My dear Frederic, how do you do this morning ?

Y. Melm. Faith, melancholy enough, and with reason.

Camp. Then I am not the first messenger of ill-news — you have heard of your father's death, I suppose. But come, though it be an afflicting circumstance, you parted from him too early in life to feel much for his personal loss.

Y. Melm. I own it ; and had his fortune died with him, I shou'd have supported the loss of that too, with equanimity : but to receive such a cruel instance of his want of paternal regard, as that of bequeathing the whole of it away from me.

Camp. I heard nothing of this.—By a letter I received from general Melmoth, a relation of your father's, just now arrived from India, I learn that Sir John is dead ; but nothing more

Y. Melm. Sir, I have learned much more. It seems, the late Sir John Melmoth, not long before his death, was married to a second wife, to whom he left his whole fortune.

Camp.

Camp. Are you well assured of this?

Y. Melm. Too well assured of it.--A father! heavens, and earth!

Camp. Nay, but compose yourself. Things may not be so bad as you apprehend.—I expect the general himself hourly in Bath; who, I dare say, when he comes to know your real character, will, if things are thus circumstanced, be your friend: At worst if you have a mind for the army, I will engage on my own interest, to set you presently at the head of a company. Then, Narcissa will have a handsome fortune; and I cannot suppose, after matters have been carried so far between you, that this accident will prove any obstacle to your marriage.

Y. Melm. It is there, there, my dear colonel, I feel this reverse of fortune the most severely. For, though Narcissa should be too generous to reject me merely from mercenary motives, ought I to have less generosity than she? ought I to take the advantage of her partiality for me, to make a prey of her fortune, and permit her to throw herself away on a young fellow without a penny in his pocket, or a profession by which he might have the prospect of getting one? No, colonel, till I am master of a competency, at least equal to hers, I will relinquish my pretensions.—But when that may be, or what may happen in the interval! O colonel—

Camp. Prithee, Frederic!—

Y. Melm. What a cruel disappointment is this! When Narcissa had just consented to reward my passion, and I expected my father in England to ratify our fond engagements.

Camp. Nay, but no more of this. Why should you distress yourself at the doubtful consequences of perhaps an imaginary evil? I cannot help thinking you are under some mistake: but be it as it will, I will venture to answer for it Narcissa is still yours. Keep only this piece of information a secret from her, till it be farther confirmed. When I see you again, we may be able to judge of it, and proceed with more certainty. *[Exit.]*

Young Melmoth solus.

Keep it a secret from Narcissa! — No, I will

fly

ly and disclose it to her immediately; she may else hear of it from some other quarter, and I would not be thought guilty of deceiving her in the slightest instance. She shall know the worst of my misfortune without delay.—Who waits there?

Enter Syllogism.

Here, Syllogism, get ready to dress; I am going out.

Syllog. I don't think I can equip your honour decently with mourning 'till to-morrow, Sir.

Y. Melm. No matter, let me have the clothes I wore yesterday. I am only going to acquaint Narcissa of my ill fortune.

Syllog. Under correction, Sir; would it not be as well if she heard of it from somebody else? Or, if she never was to hear of it at all, I should think it might be better still. Narcissa is undoubtedly a worthy young lady: but I would not have you place too great a confidence on the generosity of the sex. If you have lost your fortune abroad, Sir, it is probable you will not find your mistress at home.

Y. Melm. Then shall I know the utmost rigour of my fate, and that at once.

Syllog. But to what purpose, Sir?—Things may not possibly be so desperate as you conceive; or if they are, why make them worse, by bringing one misfortune so close on the heels of another?

Y. Melm. Inhuman father!—Attend me, I say, in the dressing-room.

SCENE II. Colonel Camply's Lodgings.

Enter General Melmoth and Colonel Camply.

G. Melm. I am glad, my dear colonel, to find you thus happily situated; and also to hear that Mr. Melmoth has merit enough to engage you so warmly in his favour. A young fellow capable of making such valuable friendships, can never be so bad as he has been represented. I own we had but very sorry accounts of my wild kinsman transmitted us to India.

Camp. My friend Frederic, Sir, is young and volatile; but having sense and principle, is in the way of reformation: for he has not only good qualities enough to make himself friends among the men, but to engage the esteem of a young lady of the first distinction for personal merit.

B

G. Melm.

G. Melm. I am pleased to hear it. An amiable and virtuous monitor of the other sex is certainly the best reformer of ours.

Camp. And I am no less pleased, for the sake of both, to find his father hath not left him destitute, as he hath been informed.

G. Melm. And yet if lady Melmoth, his new mother-in-law, had not set out for England before Sir John's decease, that would probably have been the case; her ladyship having taken advantage of the boy's irregularities to get her husband to make his will intirely in her favour. Being no stranger however to her art and avarice, I prevailed on him to make a subsequent testament just before his death; by which the lady is more moderately provided for, and the bulk of his fortune more equitably left to his son. I am myself executor to this last will, and shall take a proper opportunity to undeceive the young man, as well as his father's agent; on whom I find the widow hath greatly imposed, by means of the former will.

Camp. This will be most agreeable news to my young friend. — I am impatient to communicate it.

G. Melm. With your leave, colonel, I had rather that were deferred. I could not hope indeed to find a youth of his education and fortune as grave and prudent as a rigid moralist; yet, having received such an indifferent impression of his character, I could wish to put his disposition a little to the proof. His present mistake affords a favourable opportunity. I wou'd therefore have him kept a while in the dark, as to his real circumstances.

Camp. Will not that be cruel, general? — Consider the young gentleman's anxiety

G. Melm. I do; but he will be so much the happier for it when he comes to be undeceived. — Besides, I have my reasons; and you may depend on it, if he has real merit, the required delay will turn out to his advantage. It may be the means also of trying the disposition of his mistress; whom I should wish to have a disinterested regard for him. — If she loves him in spite of his supposed poverty, her constancy may be rewarded with a better fortune.

Camp. Nay, Sir, I shall be ruled by you, since you seem so much concerned for his welfare. *G. Melm.*

G. Melm. I am indeed greatly concerned for it, colonel : for though I am but a distant relation to him, he is perhaps the nearest now living to me.---Besides, I am bound to it, in gratitude to his father ; to whose friendship I was much indebted for my own success in life. Nay, I am not only obliged to Sir John Melmoth for my fortune, but even for his name ; which I long ago assumed, on my departure from Europe.

Camp. Assumed his name ! was yours not always Melmoth ?

G. Melm. No, Camply. Many years before you knew me, it was Wildman ; which, on the supposition of having kill'd my antagonist in a duel, I chang'd, and wish'd might be forgotten.

Camp. You raise my curiosity, general.

G. Melm. Another time I may be more explicit : for oh ! my Campley, I have a painful secret labouring here, that needs a friendly ear and heart like thine, to ease me of its burthen.---Good heav'n ! or have, or have I not a wife or daughter ! [*Aside.*

Camp. I am sorry to see you thus affected, general : but, I hope, at nothing very essential to your happiness. Yet, whatever it be, you know you may command my confidence and service.

G. Melm. I know it, colonel : but I now must leave you. Some letters, that arrived at Bath before me, require immediate attention : those dispatch'd, I'll call on you again. Nay, no ceremony. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Mrs. Mildmay's lodgings.*

Enter Narcissa and Sophia, preparing to go out.

Narc. A message from your papa, Sophy ?

Soph. Yes, my dear ; he is returned from his borough, it seems, and must speak with me.

Narc. What does he want you to canvass for him, or to produce you to your lordly husband, that is to be ? Pray do you know who he is ?

Soph. What think you of lord Sweepstakes ?

Narc. A gamester ?

Soph. A Gamester, child ! What imputation is that, among people of fashion ?

Narc. Nay, but, if what I have heard of his lordship

be true, he'd give up his pretensions to any of our sex for the queen of trumps at any time.

Soph. Then we shall never make a match, that's certain; but, in obedience to my papa, you know it is my duty to hear what he has to say for himself.

Narc. Oh, commend me to your obedience; a most dutiful daughter I profess; witness your attachment to colonel Camply, my dear.

Soph. I wou'd not be so firmly attached to colonel Camply as you are to Frederic Melmoth for all the world.

Narc. Yes, you would, Sophy, for one half of it; nay, for either of the four quarters, Europe, Asia, Africa, or America. The world is a great thing, child, and contains a number of pretty little things in it.

Soph. The best of which I wou'd venture to lay, if I had it, that you have some appointment this morning with your lover.

Narc. I make appointments with men, my dear! oh, fie! but I shall stumble upon him by accident, ten to one else, at your aunt Pedigree's—To tell you the truth, I want my spark to do something to get himself into the good graces of my mama. He does not stand so fair in her books as I cou'd wish; and his rival, lord Courtly, has a powerful advocate of her.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Ladies the chairs are at the door.

Narc. Ay, come, Sophy; we only lose time here. Let us about our business.

Exeunt.

Enter Susan, with papers in her hand.

Sus. So, there they go, to pay their morning visits, and have left me to set things to rights after them---. What a litter do these girls make with their love-letters and their billet-doux! I protest, if it were not for the pleasure that some people take in knowing other people's business, I would not stoop to pick up their blotting-papers off the floor; but Mrs. Sift, my lady's woman, would lead me an uncomfortable life of it, if I did not furnish constant information for her inquisitive temper---What a pity 'tis I can't read writing myself---I might then perhaps take as much pleasure in these things as she does. But she has the advantages of education, and was brought up at a boarding-school. To
be

I e sure, the daughter of a Quaker clergy-woman, as she is—Ods my life, here's somebody coming.—[*Crump-ling up the papers, and cramming them into her pocket.*]

Enter Mrs. Mildmay, indisposed, supported by Sift.

Sift. A chair—a chair, Susan, for my lady, quickly.

Suf. Here—here—Madam—fainting as I live—Good heavens! my dear lady.

Mrs. Mild.—[*Sitting down in a chair,*—Oh! Wild-man! oh! my—

[*faints, and falls back in the chair, Sift and Susan apply salts, &c.*]

Sift. Oh! help here!—Susan, where are the young ladies?

Suf. Both just gone out, and I know not whither.

Sift. Bless me, how unlucky!—Ring the bell—Here, John! Thomas! where are you?—[*To a servant who appears at the door.*—Run immediately to Dr. Mineral's, tell him my mistress is taken suddenly ill; he must come away directly.

Suf. Quite gone!—For heaven's sake, Mrs. Sift, what has happened?

Sift. Nothing in the world that I know of, except that a gentleman had like to have run against us, as he was passing to his coach, out of colonel Camply's; upon which my mistress was seized with such a fit of trembling, that I had much ado to support her home.—But she recovers.

Mrs. Mild. [*Speaking wildly, and laying hold of Sift's hand.*—And do I live to see thee once again?—To hold thee thus!—Indeed I never wrong'd thee.

Sift. Madam!

Mrs. Mild. — [*'looking confusedly round*—Where? Where is he? Gone again!

Suf. Poor lady!

Mrs. Mild. Run, fly, call him back.—Tell him I must, I will speak to him.

Sift. Whom? Madam!

Mrs. Mild. — [*Recollecting herself*—O!—nothing, Sift.—I talked at random.—This grievous swimming in my head distracts me.—But 'twill go off.—Give me the salts—there—now—go—you may leave me,

Sift. had you not best permit us to stay, Madam? You may relapse.

Mrs. Mild. No; leave me, I say.—[*Rising from her chair*]—I find myself much better.—[*Exeunt Sift and Susan*]—He lives—my husband lives, and I may still be happy! What full amends for all my sufferings past! for all the anxious moments of his absence! But hold;—alas;—alas! this transport may be groundless.—May he not live, and yet not live for me?—Did he not shun me, think me false, abandon me? Yet then he loved me; ah, too fondly loved me! 'Twas my preposterous conduct drove him hence.—Still in the midst of all his wild upbraidings; amidst the raving of his jealous frenzy; even when he madly flung me from his arms, his heart o'erflow'd with tenderness.—Cruel tenderness!—now turn'd perhaps, to hate, or cold indifference!—Long lost to me, he now may be another's, and I excluded ever from his thoughts, a scorn'd, rejected, and forgotten stranger!—It is, it must be so; another's wife has rob'd me of his heart;—even now, perhaps, he fondly dotes upon her, tells her the story of his former love, and teaches her to triumph in my ruin.—Distracting thought! I cannot, will not bear it.—[*Bursting into tears.*]—No—they must, they shall be parted. [Exit.]

A C T III.

S C E N E I. *Furnival's Lodgings.*

Enter Furnival and Lombard.

Furn. **T**HIS message from lord Courtly comes very opportunely, Mr. Lombard; and the expedient it has suggested, is a most admirable one.

Lomb. Why, as you say, if his lordship has the electors of Gluttonbury under his thumb, and is looking out for a wife, I don't know that we could both do better than to make up a match between him and my daughter Sophy. For, as I am also going to marry again, a daughter by a first wife will be a kind of incumbrance on the family, you know. I had partly agreed indeed with lord Sweepstakes, to take her off my hands for sixty thousand pounds.—The girl has thirty of her own; left her by her grandfather.—

Furn. Lord Sweepstakes!

Lomb. Ay.—In going to market for titles, I thought one lord as good as another. *Furn.*

Furn. Of the same rank, I grant you ; bat a viscount is as much preferable to a baron as seven pearls on a coronet are to four, which is almost two to one : so that the odds in a match with lord Courtly will be greatly in your favour.

Lomb. Then I'll be off with the baron.

Furn. By all means.—I'll take the first opportunity of making the proposal to my lord Courtly ; and depend on't, you shall be return'd member for Gluttonbury.—But here his lordship comes. I'll introduce you to him.

Enter lord Courtly, introduced by a Servant.

Furn. My lord Courtly ! your lordship's most obedient servant.

Court. Well, Furnival, you arrived before me, I see. Sir— [*Bowing to Lombard, who bows very low.*]

Furn. The worshipful Mr. Lombard, my lord, alderman of London. Give me leave to present him to your lordship, as a profess'd admirer of your character and virtues.

Lomb. My lord, your lordship's humble servant.

Court. You are well met, at Bath, Mr. Alderman, what you are come for the waters, I suppose ? You citizens live so luxuriously, since the increased importation of turtle, that you soon have a good excuse for visiting Bath.

Lomb. No faith, my lord, that's not my errand now.

Court. Pray what might bring you hither then, Mr. Lombard ?

Lomb. What brought me hither, my lord ! my own carriage, my lord, my own carriage, I assure you, ha, ha, ha !

Furn. That is, Mr. Lombard never travels in the stages, my lord.

Lomb. No, never travel in the stages, my lord, except now and then to Hampstead or Camberwell, when my horses are out of order.

Court. Well, Mr. Alderman, and pray what wind blew your carriage hither, then ?

Lomb. Wind, my lord !—good again faith, very good indeed. It was a wind, my lord ;—a whirlwind, my lord, a whirlwind ! It took us up at Hyde-park-corner,

and set us down here at the town's end.—Jehu, we came, envelop'd with clouds of dirt all the way.

Court. I thought you were more tender of your horses, Mr. Lombard!

Lomb. Ay, my lord, my own horses; but these were hacks, my lord, hacks! four legged machines, that are wound up every morning with a few oats and a whisp of hay, and set going along a turnpike-road, with a boy on their backs all day, till, like a Dutch clock, they run themselves down at night. Why—why—some of our heathen philosophers say, we are not much better ourselves, my lord, ha! ha! ha!

Court. It is Mr. Alderman's way, I presume, to be jocular.

Lomb. Nay, my lord, I hope no offence. I use no ceremony to be sure. And indeed, as Mr. deputy Purseproud says, a man that has the revenue of a Subah in his pocket, need not stand upon ceremony with any body but the Great Mogul.

Court. True, Mr. Alderman, therefore stand upon no ceremony with me.

Lomb. I won't, my lord, I won't: for though your lordship may be a great man at court, I am a great man in the city, and the courtiers and citizens have always been upon a footing, to carry on a smuggling trade together. It has been the custom time out of mind, to make an exchange between your manners and our money, my lord; and egad you generally have had the better of the bargain too, let me tell you that.

Court. Your friend is quite a wit, Barrister. I did not think the spirit of raillery had been so prevalent within Temple-bar.

Furn. Oh, my lord, there have been strange revolutions of late in the city. The citizens have their wits and men of letters among them now a days, as well as the courtiers.

Lomb. Men of letters! ay, and letters of credit too, my lord; which is more than can be said by most of the literati at your end of the town. Yes, my lord, and we have made great improvements in the arts, too.

Court. Nay, I thought the city was always famous for the arts.

Lomb.

Lomb. What the arts of pin-making and the manufacturing of thimbles, ha! ha! ha! No, my lad, no; these have been long ago trundled down in the broad-wheeled waggons to Birmingham; to make room for architecture, painting, paving, and sculpture.

Court. Sculpture! Mr. Alderman! sure the grim savages at St. Dunstan's still stand centinel, to strike the hours on the clock!—Then the giants in Guildhall look as tremendous as ever? Gog and Magog are but bad proofs of your improved taste in sculpture, Mr. Alderman. Those monuments of Gothic barbarism, shou'd be demolished before you set up for Virtù.

Lomb. Egad that's true. I thank your lordship for the hint: they must come down. But you know my lord, Rome was not built in a day—but when I come to be lord-mayor, or get into parliament.

Court. How Sir, not in parliament?

Furn. It is indeed a loss to our country, my lord: a man of Mr. Lombard's abilities could not fail of making a shining figure.

Lomb. You are very obliging Mr. Furnival; but though I am not at present in the house, I hope, with yours and his lordship's assistance, I shan't be long out of it.

Court. With my assistance, Mr. Alderman!

Furn. Yes, my lord, Mr. Lombard, has offered himself a candidate for the borough of Gluttonbury, in which I know your lordship has great interest.

Court. Then you are better acquainted with my interest than I am, Barrister—I hope Mr. Lombard does not mean to solicit my influence.

Furn. [*To Lombard aside*] You see his lordship is on the reverse, Mr. Lombard, it wou'd be better perhaps you were out of the way; while I break the ice for you.

Lomb. Egad like enough: I'll leave you—[*aside to Furnival*—] Why, my lord, to be sure, I have but small pretensions; but, as a man who wou'd exert his utmost abilities in the service of his country; if your lordship shou'd think favourably of me, I shall be ready to fulfil any engagements Mr. Furnival may enter into in my behalf.—And so, my lord, your lordship's most obedient.—[*Going, returns.*] And, depend on't,

my lord, that as soon as ever I come to the chair, or get into the house, I'll attack the giants.

Court. Ha, ha, ha! what a mixture of wit and absurdity! Prithce, Barrister, what do you mean by bringing me acquainted with this heterogeneous animal? You know I have no interest in his dirty borough of Gluttonbury.

Furn. That's true, my lord; but he does not know it: and as I am likely to reap some emolument from him myself, my regard for your lordship suggested a thought may possibly be agreeable to you.

Court. Take care Furnival, of making my honour a cloak for your knavery: you have done it too often, even to the wearing it so threadbare, that, if I were not kept in countenance by the example of other persons of rank, I should be really ashamed of myself.

Furn. Nay, but the present expedient is an honourable one, my lord.

Court. For the first, then, of your suggesting, pray let us know what it is?

Furn. You will excuse me, my lord, if I am mistaken, as I don't mean to be impertinent: but I own I conceived, that either your lordship's constitution or estate might, by this time, have suggested the expediency of your entering again into the state of matrimony. I took the liberty therefore to give a hint of your having such an intention to Mr. Lombard, who has a marriageable daughter, with whom he seems disposed to give at least, sixty thousand pounds.

Court. I understand you; and so you would have me impose on him, as having influence enough to get him returned a member, in order to prevail on him to accept me for a son-in-law! a very honourable expedient, truly!

Furn. Why not, my lord; as I dare say, we shall be sure of carrying our election:—But I beg pardon if your lordship does not choose——

Court. I own, Barrister, there are prudential reasons for my repairing my fortune with that of a wife; but so long as Narcissa keeps such hold of my heart, I can't resolve on making my addresses to any other woman.

Furn. I thought, my lord, that her avowed preference

ference of a rival had determined you to think no more of her.

Court. I thought so too : but I find my passion to be insuperable. At the same time her mother gives me encouragement : so that, till her hand be actually given to another, I cannot think of putting it out of my power to receive it.

Furn. I am sorry, my lord, my intention to oblige you is frustrated.

Court. And yet, Furnival, I stand in present need of your assistance. I want money, ready money, to supply the common exigencies of public places. My cursed ill luck has made a beggar of me.

Furn. Alderman Lombard will furnish you with any sum you require.

Court. I am afraid not. He knows better than to lend his money to a losing gamester, without more substantial security than I can easily give him.

Furn. Never fear, my lord : I will so manage him, that he shall be your spaniel, to fetch and carry, and lay down his bank-bills at your feet. Don't your lordship see that Mr. Lombard is a wit ?

Court. And do you urge that as a proof of his folly ?

Furn. I do my lord—When animals are once out of their element, their very strength degenerates into weakness. A man's forte becomes his foible. Now probity and plain common sense I take to be the proper element of worthy citizens and worshipful common-councilmen ; if any of them soars, therefore, after artificial qualifications beyond those, he becomes like a bladder-blown fish, that floats on the surface of the water, till he is snapped up by a sea gull.

Court. Well, he is in good hands ; but be sparing of him as you can.—You will let me know how you proceed.

Furn. Assuredly, my lord, I can do nothing without you. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *Mrs. Mildmay's Lodgings.*

Enter Mrs. Mildmay.

Mrs. Mild. A little thought has calm'd my ruffled spirits.—Kind Providence, I thank thee ! But whether thou hast gratified my longing eyes to make me happy
or

or miserable, thou only knowest. If my once fond husband should still harbour his groundless resentment against me,—yet that I can remove by the clearest proofs of my innocence;—but if, thinking me unworthy of his heart, he should indeed have bestowed it on another, it were in vain to discover myself.—No, if it be so, I will retire from the world, unseen and unknown.

Enter Sift.

Sift. I am glad to find your ladyship so purely recovered, Ma'am.—What could put you into such a tremulous taking?

Mrs. Mild. A sudden surprize, Sift.—I thought I saw a gentleman, supposed to have been dead and buried many years ago.

Sift. Dead and buried, Ma'am! It must then have been his ghost.—Did I see it, Ma'am? I protest I begin to be surpriz'd too.

Mrs. Mild. No, Sift, it was no ghost! the object I saw was certainly living; his looks are hardly altered; he is almost the same in appearance he was twelve years ago.

Sift. O Lord, Ma'am, men are often so much alike in appearance, that we might be sadly deceived indeed, if we trusted to our eyes.—Besides, Ma'am, if he looks the same as he did twelve years ago, he must either be a ghost, or a sad cheat; for there must be a prodigious difference in him in reality.

Mrs. Mild. Did you take notice of the gentleman, who got into his coach at colonel Camply's door, as we came by?

Sift. In the scarlet, Madam, with the mulatto servants. Yes, Ma'am; some India governor or other, I suppose; or perhaps it is Sir John Melmoth, Mr. Frederic's father.—You know, Ma'am, he was daily expected.

Mrs. Mild. No, Sift, that gentleman's name is not Melmoth.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Doctor Mineral, Madam.

[Exit Servant.]

Mrs. Mild. Doctor Mineral!

Sift. Yes, Madam; I sent for him in my flurry, when your ladyship was ill.

Mrs. Mild. Well, let him come up then.—*[Exit Sift.]*

Sift.]—Now must I bear with a little formal impertinence.

Enter Dr. Mineral.

Min. Madam, your most obsequious.—I am extremely glad to find you better than I expected.—I should have been here sooner; but——

Mrs. Mild. They need not have troubled you, I believe, doctor; I was only taken with a fainting, occasioned by a little surprize, which is now gone off.

Min. I don't know that, Madam; I don't know that. Give me leave. [*Laying hold of her hand.*] I will be bold to say, there is not a gentleman of the faculty has the tactus eruditus in a higher perfection than myself.—[*Looking at Mrs. Mildmay very earnestly.*] Why, Madam, you must have been terribly surprized indeed! your very pulse is frighted out of its wits. It is absolutely afraid to beat. Low, low,—very low, upon my word.

Mrs. Mild. Indeed, doctor, I find myself too much indisposed to bear with trifling.

Min. True, Madam; to be sure cases of this kind are not to be trifled with. I believe I have hit upon yours to an Iota. Leave the remedy to me.—I only wish I had been sent for a little sooner; though I should have been here at least half an hour ago, had I not been detained at colonel Camply's.

Mrs. Mild. Colonel Camply's! Sir!

Min. Yes, Ma'am, I call'd in there, as I was going my rounds this morning, and was very agreeably detained by the conversation of a gentleman, who has been these twelve years a Nabob-hunting in Bengal, and is now returned home loaden with the spoils of the chase: one general Melmoth, Madam; who as far as I cou'd learn, for I am never inquisitive, is a very near relation, if not own father, to Mr. Frederic Melmoth, with whom you are well acquainted.

Mrs. Mild. Oh, gracious providence!

Min. You seem affected, Madam—I hope no return of your disorder?

Mrs. Mild. I fear it may, doctor, therefore if you think of any thing that may prevent it, I should be glad you would hasten your prescription.

Min. I will, Madam, your most obsequious.—I shall dispatch.

dispatch my servant immediately with some of my nervous elixir, Ma'am, the most powerful analeptick in the whole materia medica. [Exit.

Mrs. Mild. Can my eyes have deceived me?—Cou'd I mistake—mistake the features of that well known face?—Ah, no! it was my husband. He too hath changed his name; thinking perhaps, even still, he killed his friend: but Frederic Melmoth, is he too my son? is he Narcissa's brother? If so, how timely this discovery!—O, for a clue to guide me through the maze, which yet I fear to enter!—Yet I must know more.—Sift is close and trusty—she shall inquire into circumstances, and if his hand and heart are not another's, I may yet be happy.

Enter Sift.

Come hither, Sift.

Sift. Yes, Ma'am,

Mrs. Mild. That gentleman, Sift, we were speaking of, who came out of colonel Camply's—

Sift. Yes, Ma'am.—[*Aside.*] My lady's mightily concerned about this strange gentleman—she cannot, at her time of life, surely, be taken with a red coat and a feather.—Perhaps it is some old sweetheart—Ha! like enough.——

Mrs. Mild. You observed him, Sift?

Sift. I did, Ma'am: a fine personable gentleman indeed.

Mrs. Mild. Doctor Mineral tells me his name is really Melmoth.

Sift. I told you, Ma'am, you know, how easily you might be deceived.—And so, Ma'am, it was not the person you imagined, and you were frightened for nothing?

Mrs. Mild. The doctor tells me, the gentleman we saw is young Melmoth's father.

Sift. As I guessed, Ma'am: I have a remarkable good guess.

Mrs. Mild. But cou'd not you, Sift, enquire a little into particulars. Mr. Melmoth, you know, passes for an only son; but if his father should marry again, or be married already—or——

Sift. True, Ma'am; but intrust me with the commission,

mission, and I'll inform you of every thing you want to know, I warrant you.

Mrs. Mild. Well then, attend me presently at my toilet, and I'll give you more particular instructions.

Sift. And if I don't fulfil them, if the gentleman has either man, woman, or child about him with a tongue in their heads, say my name is not——

Mrs. Mild. But you'll mind, Sift, to be no less cautious than curious in your enquiries; and communicate nothing of what you hear to any one but me.—At the same time, you may caution Susan and the rest of the servants to say nothing to the young ladies, when they return, of my sudden indisposition. It is not expedient they should know any thing of the matter.—*[Aside.]* 'Till I know my own fate, Narcissa shall be kept ignorant of hers.

Sift. You may depend upon Sift, Ma'am. But I see a chair coming into the hall. I fancy one of them is come home. *[Exit.]*

Mrs. Mild. Poor Narcissa! If I were less anxious for myself, I should be strangely concerned for her. It may not be improper, however, to take some step to abate the ardour of her passion for Mr. Melmoth as a lover.

Enter Narcissa.

Narc. I see you are returned before me, Madam.

Mrs. Mild. Yes, my dear; I seldom make my morning visits so long as yours. I suppose you have been whiling away your time some where with Mr. Melmoth.

Narc. Nay, I have not once set eyes on him to-day. Though to say the truth, Mamma, I believe I waited for him half an hour, or so, at lady Pedigree's; for, as I expected he would call there, I did not find myself hastily disposed to come away.

Mrs. Mild. And you promised to meet him there!

Narc. He promised to meet me there.

Mrs. Mild. Fie, Narcissa!—Is this keeping your promise with me? Is this being more on the reserve?

Narc. I did not think, Madam, you required me to alter my behaviour to Mr. Melmoth.

Mrs. Mild. Indeed, indeed, Narcissa, I do require it: and if you have that sense of duty a fond mother could wish you to entertain, you will not think I lay you under any severe restraint.

Narc.

Narc. Doth this new injunction proceed, madam, from the generally supposed want of discretion in me, or from any particular reason you may have to change your good opinion of Mr. Melmoth?

Mrs. Mild. Perhaps both. You must have heard, that Frederic hath been very wild; he left the university at best but abruptly: then he plays deep; and it is very natural to suppose, he may have intrigues enough, to make it imprudent for a young woman to place too great a confidence in his professions of love.

Narc. Bless us, Madam, you shock me. Intrigues!

Mrs. Mild. Nay, my dear, don't be too much alarmed; Mr. Melmoth may be as deserving as most young gentlemen of the age: but for all that, I would not have you set your heart upon him. I have my reasons, and those prevailing ones: therefore, reflect, Narcissa, and be well advised. [Exit.]

Narc. Reflect, and be well advised! What need of so much reflection and advice! My mamma hath surely met with something to ruffle her temper this morning. I protest she is quite peevish.—Not set my heart on Mr. Melmoth!—That advice comes now too late. Yet still she seems to allow him as much merit as any young gentleman of the age.—How unreasonable is this! If I am to be married at all, can I expect a better husband than the market affords? and if I am satisfied with my bargain, what is that to my mamma, I wonder!—Oh, here he comes! I'll rattle him off, for not being where he promised; and thence exposing me to this lecture.

Enter Young Melmoth.

So, Sir Frederic, and lover of mine! you are punctual to your appointments, I see.

Y. Melm. [*Aside.*] Sir Frederic! and with such formality too! She hath heard of my loss then, already.—[*Turning to Narcissa.*] Yet I could not have thought my Narcissa would have triumphed over my misfortune. I could not have thought she would so soon begin to upbraid and receive me coldly. Oh, woman! woman!

Narc. Hoity, toity! what's the matter now? The man's seriously sorrowful, as I live.

Y. Melm. Cruel Narcissa! what can I think of this?

Narc.

Narc. Think of it ! Upon my word, I am full as much at a loss what to think of it as you are. Sure the people are all at cross-purposes, or are eat up with the vapours this morning ! My mamma was here just now, and peevishly chid me forsooth, for being too kind to you : and now you come, in woeful sadness, to complain of my cruelty ! What, in the name of consistency am I to do with you both ?

Y. Melm. I don't wonder, Narcissa, that your mamma hath changed her thoughts of me. A reverse of fortune is with fathers and mothers a sufficient motive for a reverse of sentiments. But can they, whose vows have been reciprocally exchange'd, whose hearts have been once united ; can they, my Narcissa, be ever divided from motives of sordid interest ? What tho' my father be dead, and, through dotard fondness has reduced his son to beggary, I have still friends, real friends able and willing to serve me.

Narc. Your father dead ! reduced to beggary ! I now understand you, Sir. [*Aside.*] Disingenuous mama ! These then were your reasons for depreciating the character of my lover ! [*To Frederic.*] Indeed, Sir, I beg your pardon, I had heard nothing of your father's death, nor of any change in your circumstances : but I own the conversation I had just now with my mama, a good deal surprized me.

Y. Melm. Then she must have heard it.

Narc. No doubt of it : and that accounts for her behaviour.—[*Aside.*] She may find, however, that people may sometimes be as much too reserved as too open.—[*To Frederic.*] But can it really be, Sir, as you say ?

Y. Melm. Too certainly ; though I received the news myself from my father's agent but this morning, and came directly to impart it to you.

Narc. Was that prudent ? to yourself at least ? was it impossible to conceal it from me 'till after our marriage ?

Y. Melm. It was Narcissa, though no human being had known it but my self. Thoughtless and indiscreet as I am, my heart is too faithful to you, and too just to the world, to suffer me to act the part of an impostor a single moment. Nay, I come now with a design to relinquish my pretensions, till the happier circumstances of
some

some future day might entitle me to aspire to the height from which I am fallen.

Narc. To give up your pretensions, Mr. Melmoth! and was that so easy a task as to be readily resolved on?

Y. Melm. However rashly resolved, you have seen it was not so easy to be executed. For what have I done but solicit for that, which I came to resign?

Narc. And you would now marry me, notwithstanding I may have fifteen thousand pounds to my fortune and you, as you say, not a farthing?

Y. Melm. Narcissa! —

Narc. Oh! you hesitate, do you? — To be sure there is some little inequality of condition in the case: but to let you see that I am more aspiring, I am ready to venture with you on the same terms.

Y. Melm. And is it possible you can be so good as to rate my merit above your fortune?

Narc. Nay, don't give me time to weigh one against the other. Money is heavy, and worth is light, you know: if you take me at my word, I shall keep it: but if I am left to cool and ponderate, I won't answer for myself. — Grave faces and good advice may have a strange effect upon me. At present, I say, I'll venture with you.

Y. Melm. Generous Narcissa! But whether will you venture?

Narc. Any where: — to Scotland, if you are so rash as to insist upon it.

Y. Melm. Spirited girl! charming Narcissa! but when?

Narc. Now, this very day, as soon as you please. My mama has dealt disingenuously by me. I will therefore beg leave of duty to stand aside a little, 'till I pay the debt I owe to love and honour. If it be a fault, I shall trust to her forgiveness this one time. — It is a fault one cannot make a practice of, you know. — So, come, let us go in, and concert proper measures for our expedition.

Y. Melm. Charming creature! I'll accompany you to the world's end.

Narc. O yes, I intend you shall, if we should live to the end of the world. [Exeunt.]

SCENE

SCENE III. *Young Melmoth's Lodgings.*

Enter Syllogism.

So, so, so. I have been playing with a seeming dead coal, that hath been all the while burning my fingers. A plague of these potential cauteries, say I.—Sir John Melmoth, it seems, is really dead; my young master is a beggar, and I may carry his wallet. Sic transit gloria mundi! Had I thought the old baronet really defunct, I should not have been so pleasant with the young one's circumstances. But he is a deserving youth; and though I am horribly disappointed in my own expectations, I declare I am less sorry for myself than for him.—What will become of him!—For my own part I am qualified to struggle with the world—Oh! here comes Sir Frederic—in a mighty good humour too! what the devil, sure his father's not come to life again!

Enter Young Melmoth.

Y. Melm. Well, Syllogism, who hath called since I have been out.—

Syllog. Nobody, Sir; I expected to have been able to present your honour with at least a hundred visiting cards, full of compliments of condolence; but I find the world is not so impertinent; it civilly chuses to leave people under misfortunes to comfort themselves.

Y. Melm. It is the improved mode of good manners, Syllogism, not to be troublesome. You seem however, to stand in need of consolation! what's the meaning of this? It is not above an hour or two ago since you braved the storms of fortune with the fortitude of a stoick, and recommended patience to me with the eloquence of a Seneca.

Syllog. Yes, Sir; but, like Seneca too, I find I cou'd preach that to others which I cannot practice myself. But surely, Sir, I may conclude, from the pleasantry of your present disposition, that what you heard in the morning cannot be true!

Y. Melm. True! Syllogism. How shou'd it be true, when you know you observed it to be impossible.

Syllog. Nay, but Sir, joking apart, if your father be dead, how do you intend to live, now he has disinherited you?

Y. Melm. I shall do the best to supply my wants by industry.

industry. I shall find friends to put me in a way, and am only sorry it will be out of my power to reward your fidelity as it deserves.

Syllog. Nay, Sir, make yourself easy about me ; a philosopher is easily provided for. *Jactea est alea*, Sir. When I have the misfortune to leave your service, I devote myself immediately to that of the muses.

Y. Melm. What, turn poet ! then art thou condemn'd to be poor as long as thou livest. Why, the poverty of poets, man, is notorious ; it hath been a hackneyed jest for ages.

Syllog. Yes, Sir, it hath been hackneyed so long, that it is fairly worn out. When poets had no patrons but the great, the poor devils, sure enough were obliged to live upon little : but since the publick have taken them under their protection, a bard, like another man, may have two coats to his back, and every thing handsome about him.

Y. Melm. And yet, Syllogism, 'till the lawyers can decide the dispute about literary property.

Syllog. I grant you, Sir, that a freehold on Parnassus does not intitle the possessor to vote for member of parliament ; but let a man of genius once merit the favour of the town, and he may levy contributions on it, whenever his affairs require it.

Y. Melm. Levy contributions ! is not that too arbitrary ? I thought the convocation of criticks had something to do in the system of literary legislation.

Syllog. Yes, Sir, they are the lower house, and have the privilege of deciding in all money-matters. They hold their sessions in the pit, at the representation of every new play, and proceed directly to the consideration of ways and means.—To be sure, Sir, we cannot raise a shilling without the consent of the house.—But if they approve the bill, they pass it with a plaudit, and their generosity is boundless.

Y. Melm. Well, Syllogism, if you are obliged to go upon the town, I can only wish you success : but perhaps you may be better provided for, yet : in the mean time, you must not leave me abruptly—I shall want your service, for some time at least, I am going a journey of three hundred miles an end ; will you go with me, if I should have occasion for you ?

Syllog.

Sylog. Te duce Teucro, to the antipodes, Sir.

T. Melm. Come, this way then, you must take a letter for me to Narcissa.

Sylog. Of leave, I suppose, ah! poor girl! she'll be disappointed too! Oh! 'tis a bitter business. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. Colonel Camply's Lodgings.

Enter General Melmoth and Colonel Camply.

G. Melm. So then I find, colonel, you are engaged in a matrimonial expedition as well as my kinsman,—Well, I wish you success, and if you need my assistance, command me.

Camp. I thank you, general, and hope ere long to be able to return the compliment. Come, come, when you have recovered your spirits a little, we shall have you looking out for a wife as well as we younger folks.

G. Melm. Ah! my dear colonel! [*Sighs.*]

Camp. Ah! my dear colonel! with a sigh too! I have hit the mark then, general? What did you leave your heart in India? or hath a sudden conquest been made of it since your arrival in Europe?

G. Melm. Neither, Camply. I was married many years ago, and was too unhappy in that state, ever to think of entering into it again, even if I knew myself at liberty.

Camp. I never heard you had been married, general.

G. Melm. Yes, colonel, when I went over to India, I left a wife and infant daughter in England behind me.

Camp. And are they living?

G. Melm. Alas! heaven knows! I have heard nothing of them for years, except from the very man, of whom being absurdly Jealous, I thought I had killed.—He came over with our troops some time ago to Bengal, and convinced me by a number of corroborating circumstances, that I had injured both him and my wife; but to my sorrow, he could give me no farther information of her.

Camp. How fruitless then was that!

G. Melm. Fruitless as unhappy! for though my heart was something lighter, from knowing he had recovered of the wounds I had given him; yet I shou'd have much easier supported the reflection of having killed an adulterer, than that of having injured, abandoned,
and

and perhaps ultimately destroyed, an innocent wife and daughter.

Camp. But why destroyed? from this relation is it not impossible they may still be living.

G. Melm. I dare not flatter myself with such a suggestion. Nay, I hardly know whether I ought to wish it true: for if she lives, must she not long since have transferred that heart to another which I so unjustly suspected, so cruelly slighted?

Camp. But what success has attended your enquiries since?

G. Melm. None; though I have made every enquiry the distance of time and place would admit.

Camp. Perhaps in your long absence, thinking you were dead, she may have married again; and thus by her change of name, have eluded your researches.

G. Melm. If it be so, I will be no intruder on her happiness.—I will therefore carry on my future search in person; that, if I should succeed in it, I may be enabled to act as circumstances shall determine. But what a task! How dreadful is't to seek that which we hope, and yet we fear, to find! Though to be certain even of what we fear, is better far than labouring still in doubt.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Mr. Melmoth, Sir, desires to know if your honour is alone.

Camp. Your kinsman, general,—Shall he come up?

G. Melm. By all means. He may have some business with you; I'll retire into your study till you have done with him; you know I have my reasons for declining to see him at present. *[Exit.]*

Camp. How unlucky is this!—I must not tell Melmoth who is so near; and yet, if I don't, 'tis ten to one he'll say some extravagant thing or other; which if over-heard, may give the general no good opinion of him. I wish my old friend were in Bengal again only for one half hour, with all my heart.

Enter Young Melmoth.

Y. Melm. My dear colonel, how is it?

Camp. Nay, how is it with you? You seem in raptures, and it is not three hours ago since I left you in a state of despondency.

Y. Melm.

Y. Melm. Ay, you grave rogue, you—you stare to see a young fellow dejected at his ill luck in the morning, intoxicated with his good fortune before noon. But Narcissa's my own, my boy.

Camp. Who doubted it?

Y. Melm. No; it wou'd have been a sacrilege to doubt it.—So that as to my father—

Camp. Nay, but Mr. Melmoth, nothing against your father I beg of you.—[*Aside.*] The general will certainly overhear him.—[*To Melmoth.*] Well, but you did not tell Narcissa of your being disinherited!

Y. Melm. Did not I?—But I did. I told her the whole story.

Camp. The deuce you did?

Y. Melm. Without omitting a single circumstance.

Camp. And—and—and—[*Aside.*] Egad, I believe I had better ask him no more questions.—He seems in a humour to say any thing.

Y. Melm. And—and—and—what a plague do you mean by your and—and—and?—Why do you look so confoundedly serious! What the devil is the matter with you?—Ah, colonel! colonel! if you did but know all!

Camp. Nay, but I don't desire to know all—[*Aside.*] This spark's going to say some wild thing or other, now.

Y. Melm. Nay but you shall know all; for I came on purpose to tell you.

Camp. Well then, some other time.

Y. Melm. No, no other time will do: for I intend to be in Scotland by to morrow night, if possible.

Camp. In Scotland!

Y. Melm. Ay, I am going off with Narcissa to Scotland, and am come to borrow your chaise, if you'll lend it me.

Camp. And what are you going to do there?

Y. Melm. Ha! ha! ha! There's a question! I thought every body knew what penny-less young fellows took girls of fortune to Scotland for.—

Camp. Well, but——

Y. Melm. Nay, nay, will you lend me your chaise? I'll tell you more of the affair by and by—I shall want a couple of your servants, too; as, for reasons of state, I shall take none of my own with me.

Camp.

Camp. Yes, If am to see you again—[*Aside.*] any thing to get rid of you now—[*To Melmoth.*] but I shall certainly see you again before y^e u go.——

Y. Melm. Certainly.—Ce tainly.

[*Exit.*

Colonel Camply solus.

To Scotland! egad, Narcissa has an enterprizing spirit. If the general hath overheard nothing of our conversation, I must communicate this piece of intelligence to him; it may perhaps induce him to vary his plan of operation, and save them the trouble of the journey.

Re-enter General Melmoth.

G. Melm. So, colonel, your young friend hath soon left you.—I thought I heard high words within.—I hope no new cause of discontent?

Camp. Oh no, Sir; quite the reverse. Your lively kinsman is now as much elated with joy, as he was in the morning depressed with sorrow.

G. Melm. How so? He can have heard nothing, sure, of the real state of his circumstances!

Camp. Nothing at all; but it seems he hath informed his mistress of his supposed loss of his father's fortune; and she, like a generous girl, hath agreed to give him her own instead of it.

G. Melm. Indeed!

Camp. They are just going to set off for Scotland; he came to borrow my chaise.

G. Melm. And you shall lend it them, or I will clap six horses to my own travelling coach, and that shall convey them. I like their spirit, and would encourage their expedition, were the young lady even my own daughter.

Camp. Nay, but, general, why let them take so unnecessary a step?—They will certainly be better pleased, if you should discover Mr. Melmoth's real situation, and prevent them.

G. Melm. I know not that. No, let them a while enjoy the satisfaction they feel in their mutual love and gratitude. There is more pleasure in the display of true generosity, than in the possession of mines of wealth. Let them proceed, therefore, on their journey.—I warrant it will be a pleasant one.—In the mean time, however, if it be necessary, I'll endeavour to reconcile the young lady's relations to the consequences of it—But
come,

come, I called to take you home to dinner with me; we will there toast the young couple, and drink success to their spirited enterprize. [Exeunt.]

A C T IV.

SCENE I. Mrs. Mildmay's Lodgings.

Enter Syllogism and Sift, meeting.

Sift. SO, Mr. Syllogism, you are going to have old doings at your house, I suppose.

Syllog. No, no, Mrs. Sift, our old doings won't do any longer; we must have new doings now, if we intend to keep doing at all?

Sift. What do you mean, Mr. Syllogism?

Syllog. Nay, what do you mean, Mrs. Sift, if you come to that?

Sift. Mean! why rejoycings, entertainments, to be sure.

Syllog. Rejoycings! entertainments!—[*Aside.*]—O, the jade has heard of our misfortune I find, and has a mind to be merry with it.—[*To Sift.*]—You are pleased to banter, I see, Mrs. Sift.—Pray what should we rejoice at?

Sift. Rejoice at! why the arrival of Mr. Melmoth's father from the Indies.—Have you not expected him any time these six months?

Syllog. Oh, yes; and he set out from thence, it seems, near a twelvemonth ago; but which road he took, or whether he is arrived at his journey's end, is at present a little problematical!

Sift. Problematical! I am sure you scholars, Mr. Syllogism, are very pragmatical. Will you persuade me I did not hear the bells ring for him this morning?

Syllog. The bells ring for him! O lud! only think of tolling the bell at Bath for a man who died at Bengal!

Sift. Dead! Sir! What would you insinuate?

Syllog.

Syllog. What you know, I find, as well as I, and therefore I may venture to tell you.---My old master is dead, and hath left my young one nothing to live upon.

Sift. Nay, nay, Mr. Syllogism, I see you have a mind to banter me now ; but come, to business. You have brought something for Narcissa, I suppose.

Syllog. Yes, I have got a letter for her.

Sift.---[*Takes the letter, turns it about, and holds it up to the light.*]---Why there's no reading this letter without opening it !

Syllog. What do you think it is sealed up for, but to hinder you ?

Sift. Pooh ! I would not give a farthing to carry such letters. Sealed ! What did you never open a letter without breaking the seal ? Did you never take off the impression on wax, nor coax it with a hot tobacco-pipe ?

Syllog. No, Mrs. Sift, they are arts I have not been bred to.

Sift. Well, I have done it an hundred times, who was never bred to the arts at all : though I remember I once lost the best place I ever had in my life, for breaking open a letter, and sealing it up again with my thimble.

Syllog. And deservedly.

Sift. Yes, I paid for my peeping that time, it's true ; but I should have done it, had I been to die for it. I am astonished to think how any body can have so little curiosity, as not to long to know every thing that other people want to keep from them.

Syllog. I would as soon put my hand into my master's purse, as pry into his secrets ; and think a servant deserves to be hanged as much for the one as the other.

Sift. That is, if it be done with intent to betray them, Mr. Syllogism ; but otherwise---and yet, to be sure, one does sometimes do a deal of mischief by getting into secrets by halves ; but that is the fault of one's masters and mistresses, you know, in not trusting us with the whole.---You will not pretend to tell me, however, that you have no curiosity to know your master's business.

Syllog. Faith I have no curiosity to know more than he thinks proper to intrust me with. I have plague and trouble enough with that ; if I knew less, I should live a much easier life : for what between his money-matters and those of his mistress, which you know, Sift, are both

THE WIDOW'D WIFE. 51

both ticklish affairs, I have but a very troublesome time on't. [*While Syllogism is speaking, Sift is looking at the letter, and turning it about in her hand.*]

Sift. There must be something very curious, Syllogism, in this letter. It is doubled into so many pleats, and folded up as carefully as the Welch-man's guinea--there is certainly something choice in it.

Syllog. Ay, all love I suppose, Sift.

Sift. Love! eh!--that's choice stuff, to be sure!--Well, I see the direction.

Syllog. And you'll deliver it safely--you understand me--you need not be at the trouble of quartering my master's coat of arms with the milliner's.

Sift. O! the thimble! no, upon my honour.--

Syllog. You see the crest is a lion rampant, beware of the top of your middle finger.

Sift. Nay, but when I say upon my honour, Mr. Syllogism.

Syllog. I beg your honour's pardon, Madam. To be sure, after having so frankly confessed its influence over your curiosity in these cases, it would be cruel to distrust you.--[*Aside as he goes out.*] If I had my letter again however, I would as soon leave it with the printer of the Public Advertiser. [*Exit.*]

Sift solus.

They think they are mighty close here--It is written with lemon-juice, surely!--Well I have a trick for that; my mistress shan't set me upon the enquiry for nothing. I am too good a servant for that too--Ha! our young ladies coming this way!--I am determined to have another peep at it, be the consequence what it will. [*Exit.*]

Enter Narcissa and Sophia.

Narc. Well, really Sophia, this is something extraordinary that you shou'd affect to tutor me, for disobedience to my mama, in the preference I give to Mr. Melmoth: hath not she, 'till this very day, always approved of his addresses.

Soph. Therefore I am afraid, Narcissa, she has some better reasons for her sudden change of behaviour than you are aware of: at least I shou'd be for coming to a farther explanation with her before I took so irretrievable a step as you are going inconsiderately to do.

Narc. Oh! my dear, we shall take a great many steps before

before we get to Scotland. We shall not be across the Tweed so soon as we might be at the next parish church. I shall have time to consider of it again and again, therefore, before the business is done yet.---Nay, I can assure you that even when we get there, if I shou'd not happen to be perfectly of the opinion I am in at present, we may come back again no wiser than we set out. If the matrimonial apparatus does not wear a very agreeable aspect---if Mels-John does not put on one of his best faces, and his cleanest band ;---or---

Soph. Nay, but be serious.

Narc. Well, I am : and say as I did before, that if there were really any thing wrong in what I am going to do, you shou'd be the last person in the world, my dear Sophy, to dissuade me from it.

Soph. Why so ?

Narc. Because I should never listen to a lecture on disobedience from one as disobedient as myself.

Soph. How ! cannot I entertain a proper regard for colonel Camply, without incurring the guilt of disobedience ? I don't intend to run away with him, or even to marry him, without my father's consent.

Narc. Not unless he refuses to give it you ; there is no occasion for't, my dear. But if by a proper regard, you mean that the colonel is in possession of your heart, I warrant your hand will soon follow. And, tho' you may want courage to scamper away to the North, before you come of age, you may only have just patience enough to stay in the South 'till you do ; when we shall find you sneaking into the back-door of Walbrook-church, or St. Swithins, to commit the like horrid sin of disobedience.

Soph. I find, my dear, there is no talking to you on this subject : so, like a naughty girl, you must go on your own way.

Narc. And you, like a naughty girl, Sophy, wou'd go my way too, if you dar'd.

Enter Sift.

Sift. The devil take the inventors of sealing-wax, and invisible ink ;---I can pick nothing out of this letter---so I think I may as well give it to my young mistress. If she can read it, I may possibly pick something of it out of her, and that will do as well.---A letter for you, Madam. [*gives Narcissa the letter.*]

Narc.

Narc. From Mr. Melmoth!

Sist. Yes, Madam,

Narc. You will excuse me, Sophy, I must go and read my billet-doux; it may possibly require an answer.

[*Exit.*]

Sist. [*Speaking aside as she follows Narcissa.*] So!---now for a peep over the left shoulder.---Let the writing be but any how visible, and if young madam reads any more of it than I, why then, I am grown short-sighted---that's all.

[*Exit.*]

Sophia solus.

Was ever any thing so determinedly inconsiderate?---and yet Narcissa does not want for prudence, when the vivacity of her temper will suffer her to make use of it.---I wish I cou'd any how prevent this rash expedition, without betraying the confidence she has placed in me.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *The Parade.*

Enter Lord Courtly and Furnival.

Court. Urge this affair no farther, Furnival. I can be of no service to you in it.---I have consulted my heart, and find it repugnant to all my sentiments. The love I bear Narcissa, and the regard due to my own honour, both forbid it.

Furn. Give me leave to say, my lord, your scruples are too refined for a man so well acquainted with the world.

Court. Yes, barrister, I know the world too well to sacrifice so much of my own happiness, either to its pleasures or opinions, as I have done.

Furn. But if your lordship has no hopes of Narcissa, what objection can be made to your repairing your fortune by marrying another? Surely, my lord, neither the laws of love or honour forbid this!

Court. Perhaps not---but I feel an invincible reluctance to the making my addresses elsewhere. It is true, Narcissa herself gives me no encouragement; but her mother is still my friend, and affords me hopes that something may turn out in my favour. I have even just now received a message from her, desiring to see me in the evening, on particular business.---Who knows what may have happened? But be it as it may, I can-

not resolve to devote myself to another, 'till it be impossible for Narcissa to be mine.

Furn. And your lordship is determined to decline the obliging offers of Mr. alderman Lombard, with regard to the money-matters I was speaking of?

Court. If they are made on a presumption that I shall serve him where I have neither the power nor inclination.

Furn. I am heartily sorry for it, my lord; as this is not the way to pay off the mortgage on your estate.

Court. Then it must remain unpaid, barrister, 'till a more honourable method offers for its discharge. [*Exit.*

Furnival solus.

His lordship is in one of his moral moods to-day.--- I must resume the subject at a gayer moment.---And yet I'm half afraid he's lost.---These partial attachments to the sex are the ruin of many a noble spirit. While he was only a general lover, he was the most enterprizing genius on the turf.---But now---'Tis strange; but we sometimes find it in the power of one virtuous woman to reform in a few months what the libertine part of both sexes have been labouring to corrupt for years.---These modest wenches make as many converts as the methodist parsons.---Whom have we here?-- the very ladies in question, as I live!--and engaged in earnest discourse!--It may be worth listening to---I have an excellent knack of hearing at a distance. [*Retires.*

Enter Narcissa and Sophia.

Soph. And you are really determined, Narcissa, to put this wild scheme in execution.

Narc. Positively, my dear Sophia.---I shall not break my word with Mr. Melmoth, if he keep his with me. We are to have your colonel's chaise waiting for us at the town's end. I shall just go to the rooms with you for form's sake, see you set in for cards, and then vanish; slip into a chair, and be with my spark in a twinkling; leaving you, my dear, or your colonel, to make the best apology you can for me to my mama.---I have left a short one indeed myself in a letter she will find on her return in the evening.

Soph. As you have made me your confident, my dear, I shall not betray you. But I cannot say I approve of this step. Indeed I really think it unnecessary. I am certain your mama might be brought to give her consent to your marriage.

Narc.

THE WIDOW'D WIFE.

55

Narc. Nay then there is the less harm, my dear, in going to be married without it. If she has no objections, you know, but what might be removed by solicitation, the solicitation would be merely a matter of form, a piece of childish ceremony.---Besides, my dear Sophy, to answer all your petty scruples about disobedience at once, I am determined on the thing precisely because I would not be disobedient.

Soph. Ay ; make that out, Narcissa.

Narc. Very plainly.---My mama has not yet positively told me she would not have me marry Mr. Melmoth : ---on the contrary, she has hitherto encouraged his addresses : but as I shrewdly suspect she might tell me so in plain terms the next time we converse on the subject, I don't intend to give her an opportunity of laying me under any such injunction.---Because, in that case, you know, it would be downright disobedience to act directly against her positive commands.

Soph. Well ; for such a mad-cap, thou art certainly a very extraordinary casuist.---So joy go with you.

Narc. I warrant it will. I only wish we may bring it back again ; and make it last as long as the wedding ring and the parson's benison hold us together.---So come along. [Exeunt.]

Re-enter Mr. Furnival.

So, so, so---Here's an affair broke out!---What will his scrupulous lordship say to this?---Egad, we just nicked the time. The bird is feathered, and just on the wing. But the lime and twigs shall be ready, my dear. No, no, my pretty flutterer, you must not take flight, and leave us yet, neither.---What if I worked by stratagem, and entrapped my little lapwing in her own snare!---Her chairmen may possibly be prevailed on to mistake the place of rendezvous.---If I can but decoy her to his lordship's apartments, he may set her at liberty himself, if he chuses it. It is a pretty Canary-bird, and would become a gilt cage mightily. [Exit.]

SCENE III. *Mrs. Mildmay's Lodgings.*

Enter Mrs. Mildmay. (with an open letter in her hand)
followed by Sift and Susan.

Mrs. Mild. To Scotland ! and with young Melmoth ---rash, unadvised girl!---Dispatch somebody to colonel

Camply. Tell him I must speak with him instantly, on business of the utmost consequence.

Susan. Yes, Madam.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Mild. Oh! Narcissa! [*Walking about in disorder.*]

Sift. But why, Madam, should you make yourself so very uneasy? Mr. Melmoth is a worthy young gentleman.

Mrs. Mild. Talk not to me of his worth——

Sift. And the young people, heaven bless them! were passionately fond of one another.

Mrs. Mild. Ah! too passionately——

Sift. Then Mr. Melmoth is——

Mrs. Mild. You know not what he is, Sift: nor can I tell you.

Enter Servant.

Serv. My lord Courtly, Madam.

Mrs. Mild. Shew him up.

[*Exit Servant.*]

See that colonel Camply be found immediately, Sift.

[*Exit Sift.*]

Enter Lord Courtly.

Oh! my lord, I am the most terrified and distressed of women. The delight of my heart, the wish of yours, my darling Narcissa——

Court. Narcissa! what of Narcissa, Madam? you alarm me beyond expression. Surely no accident——

Mrs. Mild. Yes, the most dreadful accident!---in the most sudden and unexpected manner is she gone off with young Melmoth for Scotland.

Court. Then are my hopes at an end.

Mrs. Mild. Not so, my lord, if their design be prevented. They cannot be got far as yet. Your lordship will assist me in immediately pursuing them.

Court. If my preventing Narcissa's marriage with Mr. Melmoth, might induce her to bestow her heart on me, Madam, you might command me: but I fear hearts are not to be transferred, and she has now given a sufficient proof on whom she has freely bestowed hers. I cannot therefore think of robbing another of what he has so good a right to possess, because I had not the merit of a successful rival.

Mrs. Mild. Alas, my lord, Mr. Melmoth can be no rival.

Court. You flattered me indeed, Madam, with the discovery of a circumstance in my favour.

Mrs. Mild.

Mrs. Mild. It is this very circumstance, my lord, that aggravates my present distress ; as I now fear, that, instead of contributing to your happiness, it will only tend to my misery.

Court. What is it then, Madam ?

Mrs. Mild. In the present situation of things, my lord, I cannot refuse to impart it to you ; though I have reason for concealing it a while from all the world besides.---Mr. Melmoth is---Narcissa's brother.

Court. Narcissa's brother !

Mrs. Mild. By the most providential means, I this day discovered it ; therefore, my lord ---

Court. Nay, Madam, if that be the case ;--but are you certain ?

Mrs. Mild. Most certain ;---therefore make no delay. Narcissa cannot be Mr. Melmoth's ; she may be yours, and be happy.---All depends on the moment.

Court. Then be assured, Madam, I will give you a good account of my time. Your servants will assist me to procure the means of pursuit, and depend on't you shall speedily hear from me.

Mrs. Mild. One thing more, my lord. If either persuasion or force may effect their return, let the circumstance of their affinity be as yet kept a secret from them.---I have particular reasons for it.

Court. I shall obey your commands, Madam. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Mild. Who waits there ? John ! Thomas ! attend upon his lordship.---Well, now I am something easier. The inconsiderate fugitives will be overtaken. Inconsiderate indeed ! but alas, had it been otherwise, how innocent had been their crime ! How happy is it, that, through all the various accidents of life, there is an over-ruling providence, which often preserves us from the ill consequences of our own indiscretions ! [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV. *A Street near Lord Courtly's House.*

Enter Furnival, disguised in a Cloak, followed by a chair, with the curtains drawn.

Furn. [*Speaking low*] This way, Patrick.--- [*Exit.*]

1st Chairm. Which way your honour pleases.

2d Chairm. Ay, I thought young madam would not be after going out of town to night. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Syllogism, half drunk.

Syllog. What a round-about way have these fellows taken ; but I was only bid to follow them, and so, ite, præ, sequar.---[*Going off, stops short.*]---Hey day ! they turn into a house !--Sure that is more than we bargained for.---I hope there is no mistake here.---Drinking to besure depresses the judgment, though it elevates the imagination : if potation, however, deprives a man of his discretion, it gives him courage to face the perils it leads him into. Not that I am so tipsy as to be very valiant neither ; though I did get rather a cup too much in waiting, ere the dog-trotting scoundrels were put in motion.---But I have classical authority for taking a chearful glass in the evening, Ut vites pœnam de potibus incipe cœnam.

Enter young Melmoth.

Y. Melm. Syllogism ! What are you doing here ? Where is Narcissa ? Did not I bid you watch her coming out of the rooms, and follow her chair ?

Syllog. You did, Sir, and so I have. It is just gone into that house.

Y. Melm. Into a house ! you must have mistaken some other chair for hers. What a blockhead ! why you're half drunk ;—you can't see.

Syllog. No, no, Sir, it is no deception ; as sure as you stand there, I saw the chair, that brought Narcissa from the rooms, go into that house.

Y. Melm. Is't possible ! For heaven's sake who lives there ?

Syllog. Why, Sir, that I was posing myself about, when you came in.

Y. Melm. As I live, lord Courtly's old lodgings.

Syllog. Yes, Sir, and now I recollect, I believe his new ones too. I think I saw some of his servants about the door to-day.

Y. Melm. Was she brought hither by her own direction ?

Syllog. Faith, Sir, I can't tell ; but it certainly must be with her own consent, or otherwise she would have prevented it.

Y. Melm. And why did not you ?

Syllog. Nay, Sir, you know my orders were only to see the chair safe where it was carried to, and there to leave it. So, Sir, I walked a chalk after it, as still as a mouse all the way.

Y. Melm.

Y. Melm. But you knew whither it was going, why did not you make the fellows keep strait forward.

Syllog. Upon my word, Sir, I found it a little difficult to keep quite strait forward myself. Besides, Sir, I thought those fellows must know their way about the town better than I did.

Y. Melm. What can be the meaning of this? Sure Narcissa does not intend to jilt me! to give her hand to lord Courtly after all! O no! that is impossible.

[Goes out at the side of the scene, looking up at the house.]

Syllog. Impossible! ah, Sir, so you said, you know, when you heard of your father's death; but under correction, Sir, it is just as possible for a young lady to give away her heart, as for an old gentleman to give up the ghost.---Inconstancy and intemperance are both fatal in their consequences;---[*Hicups*]---But then those consequences are so very common, that there are matches broke off, and funerals performed to every part of England daily; and for that matter, Sir, under correction---

Y. Melm. [*Returning.*] Ha! the door opens! stand back, Syllogism, somebody is coming.

[They retire to the back of the scenes.]

Narcissa and Furnival.

Narc.---[*Speaking entering.*]---I insist upon going, Sir; let go my hand, Sir; What is the meaning of this insolence?

Furn. You must not risk the danger, Madam, of going at this time of night alone.

Narc. I can be no where in so much danger as in staying with you.

Furn. Nay, but Mr. Melmoth will be here immediately, Madam.

Y. Melm. [*Coming forward.*] He is here already, Sir.

Furn. Ha!

Narc. Oh! Mr. Melmoth what a villainous trick has been play'd us?

Y. Melm. Pray, Sir, how came this lady here? and to what purpose?

Furn. You shou'd ask the one of the chairmen who brought her, Sir; and the other of the lady who doubtless directed them.

Y. Melm. Come, Sir, no shuffling. How came you to mention my name, as a pretence for detaining her?

---Expect

---Expect to be called to a severe account for this piece of treachery.

Furn. Faith, Sir, my design was merely to oblige my friend lord Courtly, in preventing the lady's elopement.

Y. Melm. And what right had either you or he, Sir to pry into, or controul her actions?

Furn. Nay, Sir, I shall not enter into the matter of right, as the lady has nothing to complain of, but being prevented committing an act of disobedience.---But, yonder I see comes my lord himself with the servants of the family, to conduct the young lady home.

Y. Melm. Confusion; how could we be thus betray'd?

Narc. Betray'd indeed! and by what infamous means! I did not think my lord Courtly could have descended to such baseness, or my mama have abetted it. But they shall reap no advantage from the success of it.---Lead the way, Mr. Melmoth, and I'll follow you through all opposition.

Y. Melm. Syllogism, stand to your arms.-----

Syllog. Yes, Sir, and I'll make any body else stand too, or fall, that offers to molest you. [*Brandishing a cudgel.*]

Enter Lord Courtly with servants.

Court. Ha; Narcissa! and Mr. Melmoth! fortunate encounter!---[*To the servants.*] Stand back till you are called for. [*Servants retire.*]

Y. Melm. Perhaps not so fortunate as you imagine, my lord.---

Court. For you I am sure it is: and as for myself, the service I may do you both, will at least entitle me to your gratitude.

Narc. If you are serious, my lord, your absurdity borders on impertinence; if you mean to be ironical you are extremely ridiculous.

Court. I flatter myself, Madam, you will soon think otherwise; and that however unsuccessful I have hitherto been, I shall, for my assiduity to night, be rewarded with your good opinion.

Narc. Indeed, my lord, you are egregiously mistaken. What extravagance! To employ your base parasite to decoy me to your house, and flatter yourself to obtain my good opinion of it. Indeed, indeed, my lord, this is one of the grossest instances of self-adulation I ever met with.

Court.

Court. Decoy you to my house, Madam! I don't understand you.

Furn. Indeed, Madam! ---[*To Narcissa.*] I can answer for his lordship's innocence in that particular.

Narc. Yes, yes, we shall certainly take your word for his innocence.

Y. Melm. Be prepared, Sir, to answer for your own ---But come, Narcissa, ---[*offering to go*] we lose time.

Court. [*interposing.*] Let me intreat you not to be too precipitate. Mrs. Mildmay entreats, nay insists that you will proceed no farther without consulting your friends. ---

Y. Melm. One of which, I presume, is to be your lordship. No, no, my lord, we have lost too much time by your contrivance already. ---Therefore stand aside, if you please. ---

Court. Nay, but for your own sakes. ---

Narc. For our own sakes, my lord, or yours! Ha, ha, ha!

Court. This is no place to enforce my own pretensions: I act now only in obedience to Mrs. Mildmay; who charged me, to say, that all laws human and divine, oppose your union.

Y. Melm. Very pathetic indeed, my lord! Ha, ha, ha!

Furn. [*Aside.*] I must second this motion. ---[*to young Melmoth.*] Yes, Sir, and as the lady is a minor, the laws of England too. ---

Y. Melm. Oh, Sir, we shall not venture to break the laws of England, 'till we get into Scotland - so that you may spare your rhetoric.

Court. On my honour, Madam, you cannot be the wife of Mr. Melmoth.

Narc. But I suppose I might be yours, my lord, if I aspired to that dignity, and so in return for your extraordinary friendship I promise you, that when I find I cannot be Mr. Melmoth's, I will give my hand to your lordship.

Court. If I should take you at your word, Madam.

Narc. I will certainly keep it, and so now, I hope you are satisfied. [*Going.*]

Court. But Narcissa!

Narc. Your humble servant, my lord.

Court. Mr. Melmoth!

Y. Melm.

T. Melm. My lord, your most obedient.—Come Narcissa, we'll take this way—poor lord Courtly! Ha, ha, ha! *[Exit young Melmoth and Narcissa.]*

Court. Madness and folly! How rash and resolute! At all hazards they must be prevented. Mrs. Mildmay must unfold the secret.—Advance there—Barrister, pursue and detain them till I return with the young lady's mother. *[Exit.]*

Furn. Follow me. *[Furnival and servants going to advance.]*

Sylog. *[opposing them.]* Hold, hold, Mr. Barrister, not a step farther, if you please.—And you, gentlemen, keep back I charge you, as you set a store by your respective pericraniums.—*[Brandishing his cudgel, which the servants make a shew of resisting with their sticks.]*

Furn. What does the fellow mean?

Sylog. I'll shew you, Mr. Barrister, *[Throwing open his great coat, and shewing a blunderbuss slung over his shoulders.]* Do you see this curious piece of casuistry? it contains very weighty reasons against you, I assure you.

Furn. A blunderbuss loaded with slugs, I suppose! a powerful way of arguing indeed!

Sylog. This, Sir, is the ultima ratio dialectici, and is the most effectual argumentum ad hominem in the whole system of logick.

[Presents the piece to the servants, who start back.]

Furn. Is the man mad, or drunk?

Serv. Be which he will, Sir, we had better retire, for fear of mischief.

Sylog. Yes, Sir, you had better take good advice, and retire, for fear of mischief.

Furn. Wou'd the wretch commit murder?

Sylog. Not downright murder, as you lawyers wou'd call it; but being a little inebriated, one's hand is apt to shake, and this damned trigger here has no catch. *[Plays with the lock of the piece, with the mouth turned towards Furnival]* Besides, Sir, I am placed here upon duty; and by all the rules of war and logick, if you proceed vi et armis, I must oppose you by the same mode of ratiocination; therefore give up the point, ye scoundrels, *[Turning about, and presenting the piece at the servants]* or I will let fly such a shower of majors and minors among you, as shall make you tremble for the consequences.

[The servants run off.]
with

Furn. What, all gone! then I think I may as well withdraw my plea too. His lordship will certainly be non-suited.

[Sneaks off.]

Syllogism solus.

So! the enemy hath made his retreat, and the day's my own. Egad I think I have displayed my prowess pretty well here.—I hope by this time my general hath carried off the spoils of the field, and then I shall have nothing to do but make an end of my supper, and sing Te deum for the victory—with a health to the King.—Tol de rol, tol de rol.—*[Shoulders his blunderbuss and struts off humming the tune of the Belleisle march.]*

ACT V.

SCENE the Parade.

Enter general Melmoth and Colonel Camply.

General Melmoth.

THAT was unlucky, colonel—and so the young folks were intercepted in their flight.

C. Camp. By the lady's mother, Sir; who, being early informed of their intention, was by the aid and advice of lord Courtly at the place of rendezvous before they set off. For my own part, apprehensive that my assistance would be called for, I purposely kept out of the way.

G. Mel. And how takes my kinsman his rival's interposition in this affair? Have you seen him to day?

C. Camp. Just now; and horribly mortified at his disappointment, I assure you. He had just dispatch'd a note to lord Courtly.

G. Mel. A challenge! ha! colonel!—a mettled spark! But we must have no fighting, if it can be decently prevented: the consequences may be fatal.

C. Cam. I don't see how Mr. Melmoth can recede, general; he must call his lordship to account for his last night's misbehaviour.

G. Mel. Well, but you may be his second, colonel, and prolong the ceremonials 'till I have had some talk with the young lady's mother. I promised yesterday to endeavour to conciliate matters with her relations, had

she

she gone off with my kinsman to Scotland; I can do no less than try how far my influence may extend now. If Mrs. Mildmay's objections to young Melmoth be merely founded on his supposed want of fortune, they are readily obviated; and if lord Courtly be as you say, a man of sense and principle, he will give up the point; and no longer endeavour to divide two young people, whose hearts seem form'd for each other. O! here comes Mr. Alderman Lombard.

G. Mel. I had a meeting with him last night, to settle the affair of my executorship; when I took an opportunity to mention yours with his daughter, Sophia; as also your electioneering business; in which he does not meet with the encouragement he expected; so that you may not find him so refractory as you imagined.— I have taken some steps towards your reconciliation?

C. Cam. This is so kind and obliging in you, general—

G. Mel. Nay, no compliments, my dear colonel; while dead to family connexions myself, I live but for the service of my friends.

Enter alderman Lombard.

Good-morrow, Mr. Alderman.—

Lomb. Good morrow to you, general.—(to Camply) your humble servant, Sir.

G. Mel. Colonel Camply, Mr. Lombard; a gentleman extremely desirous of a more intimate acquaintance with you.

Lomb. I know it Sir.—Tho' a stranger to his person, I am none to his name, and pretensions.—

G. Mel. To both which, Sir, I hope you will soon be reconciled.

Lomb. I don't know that, Sir.—You set up for a borough, it seems, that I want to get for myself.

C. Cam. I do, Sir, at the general request of the constituents.

Lomb. And you put up for a daughter too, whom perhaps I have a mind to keep to myself.

G. Mel. What, if you can dispose of her to advantage, and make her happy in a good husband, Mr. Lombard! No, no. I dare say you are too good a father for that.

Lomb. Why, to be sure, general, if I could promote her happiness, and my influence in the borough at the same time—

G. Mel.

G. Mel. Both which I dare say you will, in conciliating matters with my friend, the colonel. You own'd, Mr. Lombard the force of the arguments I made use of last night.—I shall now therefore, leave the discussion of the matter to yourselves; having some business of consequence to dispatch elsewhere. Mr. Lombard, your most obedient.— [Exit.

Lomb. General, your servant.—Wel, young gentleman what is it you have to propose?

C. Cam. Sir, if you please to step to my lodgings, we may there talk the matter over a little.

Lomb. Look'ye, Sir, if you love my daughter, you must give up the borough.

C. Cam. Sir, I have the highest regard for both, and doubt not I shall be able to satisfy you.

Lomb. I am not so soon satisfied, Sir.—

C. Cam. This way, Sir, if you please.—

Lom. My daughter or the borough Sir,—take your choice—Sophy or Gluttonbury—mind, I stick to that.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II. *Mrs. Mildmay's.*

Enter Mrs. Mildmay and Sift.

Mrs. Mild. Well, Sift, and what have you learned this morning?

Sift. O lord, Madam, it is exactly as I guess'd yesterday. What Mr. Melmoth told Narcissa, Mr. Syllogism told me; but I knew it was a fib the moment I heard it.

Mrs. Mild. But how are you assur'd of it to day!

Sift. From colonel Camply's own mouth, madam; who call'd me into the parlour this morning, and began to catechise me like a school-master. Mrs. Sift, says he, what makes you abroad so early? What, your ladies have sent you out upon the enquiry, I suppose: I know they are curious and inquisitive.—Indeed, Sir, says I, you know no lady in our house half so inquisitive as myself. Well, says he, what's the news then, at home? Why, Sir, says I, we hear that Mr. Melmoth's father is dead, and has disinherited him.—Disinherited him! says he, an idle story, Sift, an idle story, there is nothing in it.—So I thought, an please your honour, said I, for I understood Mr. Melmoth was son to the strange gentleman who visited you yesterday. Ay, Sift, says he, while that gentleman lives, Mr. Melmoth's fortunes are in the hands of a father.—

ther.—Oh, ma'am, I'm positively certain it is as I first suggested.—

Mrs. Mild. Then so far all is well ; but did you learn nothing more ?

Sift. Oh, yes, ma'am ; you wanted to know if the gentleman was married or not : but that seems to be a doubt !

Mrs. Mild. A doubt ! Did colonel Camply say it was a doubt !

Sift. No, madam, I did not think that a proper question to put the colonel. But Mrs. Tiptoe, his honour's house-keeper, with whom I had a little confab afterwards, over-heard the gentleman tell her master yesterday, that he was married.

Mrs. Mild. How then is it a doubt ?—[*aside.*] Oh no ! my fears are true, and I must still be wretched.

Sift. Why, it seems, madam, the gentleman has lost his wife.

Mrs. Mild. Lost her ! How ?

Sift. Nay, ma'am, I know nothing more than that he can't find her ; so that at least she is lost to him. He has not seen her, I find, these twelve years past : though, by his own account, which is a little extraordinary, he has been looking for her almost from one end of the world to the other.

Mrs. Mild. Good heavens ! my hopes revive.

Sift. The colonel, advises him, if he don't find her soon, to look out for another : but he is one of your constant swains it seems ; and declares, that if his first love cannot be found, she shall certainly be his last.—Whether the gentleman will keep his word or not, is another affair. But this is all I could learn of the matter, madam, as it stands at present.

Mrs. Mild. I am satisfied. [*aside.*] Is he then true to one he thought unfaithful ? and can he still remember me with tenderness ? [*to Sift.*] Go, leave me, Sift ; I see Narcissa coming.—

[*Exit Sift.*]

Enter Narcissa.

Well, Narcissa, I hope, that, on reflection, you are convinc'd of the danger and impropriety of your behaviour. Think, my dear, into what frightful perils your indiscretion had betray'd you. Believe me, child, such unadvis'd proceeding, differs little from wilful disobedience.—

Narc.

Narc. Indeed, madam, I shudder at the reflection, and am hardly recover'd from the terror into which your relation had thrown me.—But, with regard to Mr. Melmoth's affinity, how was it possible for me, to have any suspicion of it?

Mrs. Mild. It certainly was not: but, in a matter of so much importance, you should not have acted so precipitately.

Narc. Nor should I, mama, had not you been so much on the reserve, and spoken of Mr. Melmoth so disrespectfully yesterday morning.—But for the future, I am all obedience.—How would you have me behave to him now?—as you said so little to him last night, he will undoubtedly make me a visit this morning.—How am I to resist his solicitations, without giving him my reasons for it.

Mrs. Mild. Cannot you turn the conversation on another subject? I shall now very soon come to an explanation with your father.

Narc. My father! madam.

Mrs. Mild. Yes, Narcissa, that long lost father, whom you have heard me so often lament, is now in Bath. I saw him yesterday by accident, and to day intend to procure an interview; which should have been over, before I had imparted this circumstance, had not your last night's adventure anticipated the discovery of Mr. Melmoth's being your brother.

Narc. But, is it not strange, madam, that he should say nothing to me of his father's arrival? But, on the contrary, should tell me he was dead, and had disinherited him?

Mrs. Mild. I cannot divine his reasons, for such behaviour. But, men in love, Narcissa, are strange creatures. He might do it, possibly, to make a trial of your regard for him.—

Narc. It must have been a scheme sure to mislead me into that dangerous project of elopement, which might have prov'd so fatal.

Mrs. Mild. It might be so; and therefore it would not be amiss, my dear, if you affect to resent it as such; nay, I would have you do it, were it only to give a preparatory check to his passion, before he knows that you're his sister. It will be improper for me to see him yet,

yet, as well in regard to what has pass'd, as to the danger of betraying a mother's affection too soon. I must speak first with your father.

Narc. In what a situation then, madam, do you leave your Narcissa? Is it for me to act so hard a part? Can I affect to treat with disregard, the man so late I lov'd? Alas! I find his image wanting here. The void it left, no brother can supply.—Oh! my poor heart!

Mrs. Mild. I share, my dear Narcissa, your distress; and would not task you with a mother's weakness. But, for this once, call up your resolution: an explanation yet were premature.—But here he comes—I must retire. [Exit.]

Narc. Then let my duty teach me to dissemble.

Enter young Melmoth.

(As he enters) Narcissa! and alone! I feared this happiness had been denied me.—My dear, Narcissa! I am glad to see you look so charmingly to day.—I was afraid, the ill success of our last night's adventure, might have had an effect upon your spirits.

Narc. *[In a trembling voice, being greatly disturbed.]* Not at all, Sir, I never was in better spirit in my life.

Y. Mel. Indeed! I wish I could say so—but our unlucky disappointment!

Narc. *[Still in perturbation.]* Unlucky!

Y. Mel. Cruelly so: we might, ere this, have been half-way on our journey; and, in a few hours more, at the end of it;—where we might have put it out of the power of accident to part us.

Narc. For that very reason, Mr. Melmoth, may it not be as well we were prevented?—What to be tied together for life! never to be parted! Might we not, in time, have been tir'd of one another; and, after that, have been most disagreeable companions?

Y. Mel. Glad we were prevented! tir'd of one another! disagreeable companions! How different is this language, and this behaviour, Narcissa, to that of yesterday?

Narc. What if I should have chang'd my mind since yesterday, Sir?

Y. Mel. Chang'd your mind, Narcissa!

Narc. Is it impossible, Sir?—Did you never hear of a woman's changing her mind?

Y. Mel. Yes, madam, I have heard of wonderful changes

changes in women's minds:—but you are not in earnest, Narcissa?

Narc. Indeed, Sir, I am at present in no disposition for jesting.—[*Very gravely and confused as through the whole scene.*]

Y. Mel. And you are really glad we were prevented going to Scotland to be married? Surely you dissemble with me?

Narc. Not in that, believe me, Sir.—I would not have gone off with you to Scotland, and been married to you, for the world.

Y. Mel. Nay, then there is a change indeed.—But, for heaven's sake, why? What can have work'd this astonishing alteration? What have I done, or said, or thought? How am I chang'd, that such a change should have happened in you? Some villain, envious of my happiness, must have unjustly traduc'd, and blacken'd my reputation.

Narc. Why, something has been said of you, it must be confess'd. But it was so far from being to your disadvantage, that, had I never had any knowledge of you before, it would have induc'd me to love and esteem you as a brother.—But, with regard to your own behaviour to me, Mr. Melmoth, I must own it has been very exceptionable. How could you tell me, Sir, that your father was dead?

Y. Mel. He is, Narcissa.—

Narc. Fie, fie, Mr. Melmoth.—I am well assur'd your father is still living; and, must freely declare, that were there not another man in the world, I would not give my hand to his son.—[*aside, bursting into tears.*]
—Now, I hope, my mama will be satisfied. *Exit.*

Y. Mel. Do I live? Am I awake—[*looking after her with astonishment.*]
—Was that Narcissa or am I Frederic Melmoth? What can be the meaning of all this?—If she be lost, I know at least who to thank for it.—Lord Courtly shall pay dear for this officiousness.—I must and will have this behaviour explained. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III. *Another apartment in the same house.*

Enter General Melmoth, shewn in by a servant.

Serv. Please to walk this way, Sir.—Mrs. Mildmay desires to be at present excus'd; but my young mistress will wait on you immediately. *[Exit servant.]*

Enter Narcissa.

G. Mel. Madam your most obedient.

Narc. [*Aside.*]—Another painful task ! Is this my father ? certainly it is—he strikes me with an awe I never felt before.

G. Mel. I am sorry, madam, I cannot have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Mildmay.

Narc. [*Hesitating and confused, as through the whole of this scene.*] You have then business with my mama, Sir.

G. Mel. I have, madam ; but, as you are principally concerned in it, I shall, with your leave, impart it to you.

Narc. If it be of immediate consequence, Sir—otherwise I should rather—

G. Mel. Nay, but young lady, it is of consequence, and to you too : I am not to learn, with regard to your late generous behaviour to Mr. Melmoth.—I am a relation of his ; and, apprehending your last night's disappointment might have some disagreeable consequences, which I am able to remove, I have taken the liberty of the present intrusion.

Narc. This openness of behaviour on your part, Sir, would be a reproach to any mean reserve on mine. But I am only at liberty to say, that the disappointment, as you call it, was a fortunate one.

G. Mel. Is it possible you can think so ? Then must I have been misinform'd.

Narc. You will excuse me, Sir ; but my mama hath fully convinc'd me, that my intended marriage with Mr. Melmoth, would have been highly improper.

G. Mel. Improper !

Narc. Dreadful !—

G. Mel. You astonish me, madam.—Dreadful ! What new folly hath he committed, then ? to what baseness descended, that should make an alliance with him deserving such an epithet ?

Narc. Don't mistake me, Sir ;—I have still the highest esteem for Mr. Melmoth ; but my mama—

G. Mel. Objects to his want of fortune ; I know it. But if I convince her she is mistaken.—

Narc. Yet even then, Sir, notwithstanding the sincere regard I still entertain for Mr. Melmoth, and the great respect which, though a stranger, I feel for you, I could not be induc'd to listen to the solicitations of either.

either.—No, Sir, I never can marry any man who calls you father.—But I can explain myself no farther. My mama is, by this time, disengag'd, and will herself attend you. *[Exit.]*

G. Mel. What is all this ? Respect for me !—not marry any man who calls me father !—I am not young Melmoth's father ; and if I were, what then ?—unless—but here comes the mother ; she may speak more plainly.

Enter Mrs. Mildmay.—*[Who stands at a distance, and looks at him with tenderness.]*

I beg pardon madam, but—*[bowing ceremoniously, and advancing, 'till looking full in her face, he retreats slowly back.]* Sure—that face—I—

Mrs. Mild. Mr. Wildman !

G. Mel. Her voice too !—Gracious powers !—It is—'tis she—it is—my wife—

Mrs. Mild. Yes ; I am your wife, your once beloved wife.

G. Mel. And still belov'd—Come to my arms, thou long-lost, injur'd woman.—*[they meet and embrace.]* Oh, my wife !

Mrs. Mild. And art thou still my husband ?—I thought thou hadst forgotten me.

G. Mel. Forgotten thee ! Oh, never, never.

Mrs. Mild. Hast thou forgiven me too ?—

G. Mel. Forgiven thee, love !—Why, thou didst never wrong me.

Mrs. Mild. Indeed, I did not ; even when you thought me guilty, I was innocent.

G. Mel. I know thou wast ; and 'tis in knowing that, that I've so long been wretched.—Yes, thou wast innocent ; but it was I, 'twas I, forgot the father and the husband, and wrong'd both thee and thine.

Mrs. Mild. Yet, I was indiscreet, and much to blame.

G. M. Idle recrimination ! no ; you never were to blame—and yet, your name is Mildmay. *[Turning from her.]*

Mrs. Mild. Nay, turn not from me—I perceive your doubts ; but they are vain and groundless ; my name's assum'd like thine—For your embraces form'd, and yours alone, these have been widow'd arms e'er since you left me.

G. Mel. My faithful wife ! Come then again to mine, and dwell for ever there. *[Embracing.]*

Mrs. Mild. Alas, my love, this meeting's like a vision. You seem as one new risen from the dead.—

G. Mel. 'Tis the re-union of departed souls, favour'd by heav'n to meet again above, with joy unutterable.—

Mrs. Mild. Oh ! let us, then, thank heav'n for such a meeting.—

G. Mel. I cannot thank it better than I do. Heav'n knows the heart ; and, from the fulness of my present joy, sees mine o'erflow with gratitude.

Enter Narcissa.

Mrs. Mild. Narcissa, come, and take a father's blessing!

G. Mel. Is this my daughter too !

Narc. Oh ! my father. [Kneeling.

G. Mel. I will, but need not, bless thee. Heaven hath been so much kinder to thee than thy father.

[Raisés her up, and embraces her.

Enter young Melmoth.

Mrs. Mild. Welcome, my Frederic, to a mother's arms.

Y. Mel. Do you, then, give your daughter to my wishes ? Thus let me thank you for the precious gift, —[Kneeling, and kissing *Mrs. Mildmay's* hand ; then rising and turning to *Narcissa*.—But will *Narcissa* ratify the grant ?

Narc. [In a tone of great concern.] Indeed, brother—I know not what to say.—

Y. Mel. Brother ! *Narcissa* !

G. Mel. Whence this mistake ?—[to *Mrs. Mildmay*.] We have alas ! no son : our Frederic died, poor boy, long since, in India.

Mrs. Mild. Then have my hopes and fears alike been fruitless.

Narc. [Aside in a tone of joy and surprize.]—Again I feel my swelling heart replete.—

Y. Mel. How ! what !

Narc. And you are not my brother then at last ?

[To young *Melmoth*.

Y. Mel. Your brother, *Narcissa* ! No ; dear as I might love a sister, I would not be your brother for the world. I see through the whole of your strange behaviour now.

G. Mel. [To *Mrs. Mildmay*.]—This young gentleman, my dear, is son to a distant relation lately dead : to whose

whose fortune he is heir, and to whose last will I am executor.

Narc. Hoity toity! here's a tangled skein unravell'd.

Y. Mel. [*Aside.*—And general Melmoth is Narcissa's father!

—*Enter lord Courtly, introduc'd by a servant.*

Serv. Lord Courtly, madam. [*Exit Serv.*

Court. Ladies and gentlemen your servant. Happily assembled, I hope.—[*turning to young Melmoth.*—I presume, Mr. Melmoth is, by this time, convinc'd of the impropriety of the angry billet he sent me this morning.

Y. Mel. The mistake we both lay under, my lord, at once justifies your behaviour and my resentment.

Court. Fortunately for me, however, that mistake drew a promise from the amiable Narcissa; which, I flatter myself, she is too generous to forget.

Narc. It is true, my lord, I did promise to give you my hand, if Mr. Melmoth could not accept it; and, if you had come some few minutes ago, I should have been terribly puzzl'd what to say to you. But I can now keep my word, without your reaping any advantage from my promise.—

Court. Madam! Mrs. Mildmay, what have I to hope?

Mrs. Mild. Indeed, my lord, my present perplexity of joy and surprize, makes me as incapable of expressing my obligations, as the event puts it out of my power to requite them. Narcissa is not Mr. Melmoth's sister; but, instead of a brother, she hath found a father, and I a husband; to whose guidance and protection we now are subject.

G. Mel. With your leave then, madam, Mr. Melmoth shall be yet your son.

Y. Mel. Then have I found, instead of lost a father. [*Bowing to general Melmoth who advances to embrace him.*

Mrs. Mild. As to the preference I once gave your lordship—

Court. It lays me under an obligation, madam, that, in the present circumstances, makes all apology needless.

Narc. Generously said; is not it, Mr. Melmoth?—Indeed, my lord, I wish you a better wife than I should have made you.

Court. And I you, madam, all happiness, with a husband that deserves you.

Y. Mel. I shall endeavour to merit the compliments my lord.

Enter alderman Lombard, colonel Camply and Sophia.

Lomb. Your servant, gentlemen and ladies. You seem to be mighty well pleas'd here : my daughter Sophy and the colonel have let me a little into something.—

G. Mel. Oh, Camply ! oh, my friend, behold my injur'd, much wrong'd wife and daughter !

Camp. Is it possible !

Lomb. How, how ! the widow Mildmay, Melmoth's wife !

G. Mel. I see you're fill'd with wonder ! I could, indeed, relate a tale most wonderful, but that the excess of joy prevents its utterance.

Lomb. Well then, we'll wait, general, 'till you are a little more sorrowful.—In the mean time, I must inform you, that I have settled matters with your friend Camply.

G. Mel. I am glad of it, Sir.

Lomb. Ay, ay, my daughter and the borough go together. There, take her, colonel ; and make her just as good a husband as she proves a wife—for my own part, I shall defer my matrimonial project to another opportunity : and, I think, it would not be amiss if his lordship follows my example.

Court. Sir, I hope I shall always have generosity of temper enough, to rejoice in the happiness of others, though not directly conducive to my own.

G. Mel. Such a disposition, my lord, cannot go long unrewarded. Your lordship will do me honour in permitting me to cultivate a farther acquaintance with it. But, from the events of to-day, we may see how ineffectual are all attempts to separate those whom love hath united, and heaven preserv'd for each other.

F I N I S.



P R O L O G U E,

Spoken by Mr. HOLLAND.

*To gain the public ear, the man of rhimes
Should always speak the language of the times ;
And little else hath been of late in bearing
Than terms and phrases of Electioneering.*

*Our author therefore sends me to assure ye,
Worthy and free electors of Old Drury,
How happy he should prove, if it content you,
That he be one of those who represent you ;
The state Poetic, laws and legislature,
Like the Political in form and nature ;
Phæbus, the Nine, and Bards of reputation,
King, Peerage, Commons, of the scribbling nation.*

*Now from Parnassus' throne the Prince of Wit,
It seems, hath issued out his royal writ
For a new member.— No offence to give
To a late worthy representative ;
Who, ris'n to favour, hath from us retreated,
And 'mongst the Lords of t'other house is seated,—
His service lost, presuming you may need him,
The present candidate would fain succeed him.*

*Not that he vainly boasts, on this occasion,
He met encouragement from your persuasion ;
Or that both friends, who love, and foes, who hate him,
Have been unanimous to nominate him.*

*'Tis for this loyal borough his affection,
And patriot zeal, that make him risk th' election ;
To his constituents subject to controul ;
With whose good leave, he means to stand the poll ;
Trusting secure to their impartial choice :
The town uncanvass'd for a single voice ;
Nay, brib'd no brother burges's bard of note,
Nor by corruption gain'd one critick's vote.*

*Too proud to beg, too modest to demand,
By merit only would he fall or stand :
Nor enmity nor friendship interfering,
He only asks a fair and candid bearing.
If, after that, you should with scorn reject him,
Or make one honest scruple to elect him,
He'll lay his unadvised scheme aside,
And frankly own himself NOT QUALIFIED.*

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE,

By a FRIEND.

*W*hen'er physicians wrangle with each other,
And college-dons shut out each licens'd brother,
Should they throw squibs, made up of Latin scraps,
And come to pulling wigs, as women caps,
The sick grow well,—Death will not lay about him;
He has more honour than to work without 'em.
Should you [to the pit] whose skill and wisdom we acknowledge,
The fellows of this old dramatic college,
(No matter what the cause of disputation,)
Croud hither ev'ry night for altercation;
The Bard, half dead before, enjoys the sport,
Gets strength each day, and is the better for't.
Warm'd with this subject, let your fancies play,
And me, by licence, make a Doctor, pray;
Suppose this gown, a suit of velvet, plain,
With a gold button, and this tan a cane;
My cap a formal tye, most wisely big,
O, no—I had forgot—a smart bag wig:
No phyic-bushes now are seen in town;
For all the signs, you know are taken down;
Call me licentiate, fellow, what you will,
I'll feel your pulses all,—and prove my skill.
The pulses of the boxes first I feel.—
And by their beating will their thoughts reveal;

[She acts the doctor feeling a pulse.

Languid and low—Wildman's old fashion'd story
Was much too nervous, to be set before ye.
For twelve long years, a tender wife forsaking,
Worn out with wand'ring, and what's worse, with raking:
Then to return,—He was not worth the taking.
[To the pit] }
At last the pulses of my friends above—
They throb for joy—when spouses kiss and love.
Bliss to many hearts,—what means this palpitation!
Each wife's blood is now in agitation!
Each quack's pulsation for Narcissa beats;
When she went off—they scarce could keep their seats.
When Lombard talk'd of bribes,—how felt you that? [To the pit.
Some pulses in this house went pat, pat, pat.
If this one night's prescription you have taken,
If about my face, or your heads much shaken;
If you perceive some character, some wit,
Some sense and humour—quantum sufficit;
If you can catch a volatle of satire,
Or a quack's noctic repetitum;
If by our nostrums you are kept alive:
For so the regimen of doctor CURE.



